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THINGS AS THEY ARE;

OR,

TRINITARIANISM DEVELOPED,

IN ANSWER TO A LETTER OF THE

REV. DANIEL THOMAS OF ABINGTON,

WITH STRICTURES ON THE SENTIMENTS OF THE LATE

REV. DR. S. HOPKINS; OF THE REV. DOCTORS EMMONS AND GRIFFIN; OF THE REV. E. SMITH AND MR. T. A.

IN RELATION TO THE

DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

BY JACOB NORTON, *A. M.*

PASTOR OF THE FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY IN WEYMOUTH.

"Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, while ye searched out what to say. Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced—When I had waited, I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion." ELIHU.

———*"These evils I deserve, and more;*
Acknowledge them FROM GOD *inflicted on me*
Justly; yet despair not."——— MILTON.

BOSTON:

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NOTICE.

The author of the following pages having for a considerable time been considered by several of his *lately* associated brethren, as an heretic, on account of his differing from them in opinion, with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity; and having been denied, by them, an interchange of professional labors, while they assigned no distinct or precise reason for this their denial—was, by a sense of duty constrained, in the month of January last, to express to the members of the Association, then convened, the regret and concern which he felt from the treatment he had received from them.

The communication which he made to his brethren was dictated, by a spirit of fraternal affection—by an ardent desire to promote brotherly love and union, and to advance the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom. Nor was the communication made, as he believes, in a manner which was indicative of any other, than a spirit of candor, of serious concern, and of respectful fidelity. But to his great disappointment the communication was, at the time, treated by his brethren, with the *neglect* of *expressive* silence.

Early in February, however, he received a letter from one of the members of the Association, the Rev. Mr. Thomas of Abington, containing some notices of the communication above mentioned. To this letter the author of the following, prepared an answer with a view to the publication of both, conjointly. But as Mr. T. "cannot give his consent" that his letter should be published,

and as he has, in a personal interview with the writer of this, so explained and qualified several incorrect statements and exceptionable passages in his letter, the author of the following, thinks it advisable and expedient to suppress his answer to it, so far as it relates to those statements and passages. And most gladly would he suppress the whole of it but for the considerations that the duties which he owes to himself—to the beloved and respected people of his pastoral charge—to his brethren in the ministry—to christian churches and societies—to the cause of truth and religious liberty—to God and the Saviour, require him, as he believes, to make it public.

That it may be read with a candid spirit, and with serious and prayerful attention; that it may be happily instrumental of removing misapprehensions, of rectifying mistakes, of developing truth, of ameliorating an uncandid and censorious temper, and of promoting christian charity and union, is the heart's desire and prayer to God of the

AUTHOR.

The following extracts from the solemn address of the eminently pious and candid Dr. Watts, which was made to the great and ever-blessed God, on a review of what he had written in the Trinitarian controversy, is earnestly recommended to the serious perusal of the reader, as containing the sentiments, the views and desires of the author of the following pages.

ADDRESS.

Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet I may talk with thee concerning thy judgments. Permit me, O my God and Father, to plead with thee concerning the revelations of thy nature and thy grace, which are made in thy gospel. And let me do it with all that humble reverence, and that holy awe, of thy Majesty, which becomes a creature in the presence of his God.

Hast thou not, O Lord God Almighty, hast thou not transacted thy divine and important affairs among men by thy Son Jesus Christ, and by thy holy Spirit? and hast thou not ordained that men should transact their highest and most momentous concerns with thee, by thy Son and by thy spirit? Must I not know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ thy Son, whom thou hast sent, that I may fulfil all my respective duties towards thyself and thy Son, in hope of eternal life? Hath not thy Son himself, appealed to thee in his last prayer, that eternal life depends on this knowledge? And since thou hast made so much use of thy holy Spirit in our religion, must I not have some knowledge of this thy Spirit also, that I may pay thee all these honors thou requirest from this divine revelation?

Hast thou not ascribed divine names, and titles, and characters to thy Son and thy holy Spirit in thy word? And yet art not thou and thou alone, the true God?

Holy Father, thou knowest how firmly I believe, with all my soul, whatsoever thou hast plainly written and revealed in thy word. I believe thee to be the only true God, the supreme of

beings, self-sufficient for thine own existence, and for all thy infinite affairs and transactions among creatures. I believe thy Son Jesus Christ to be all-sufficient for the glorious work of mediation between God and man, to which thou hast appointed him to fulfil the blessed works for which thou hast exalted him, and to govern and judge the world in thine appointed time.

I believe also thy blessed Spirit hath almighty power and influence to do all thy will, to instruct men effectually in divine truths, to change the hearts of fallen mankind from sin to holiness, to carry on thy work of illumination, santification, and consolation on the souls of all thy children, and to bring them safe to the heavenly world. I yield myself up joyfully and thankfully to this method of thy salvation, as it is revealed in the gospel. But I acknowledge my darkness still. I want to have this wonderful doctrine of the all-sufficiency of thy Son and thy Spirit, for these divine works, made a little plainer. Is it a vain and sinful curiosity to desire to have this article set in such a light, as may not diminish the eternal glory of the unity of the true God, nor of the supremacy of thee, the Father of all?

Hadst thou informed me, gracious Father, in any place of thy word, that this divine doctrine is not to be understood by men, and yet they were required to believe it, I would have subdued all my curiosity to faith, and submitted my wandering and doubtful imaginations, as far as it was possible, to the holy and wise determinations of thy word. But I cannot find thou hast any where forbid me to understand it, or to make these enquiries. My conscience is the best natural light thou hast put within me, and since thou hast given me the scriptures, my own conscience bids me to search the scriptures to find out truth and eternal life. It bids me try all things, and hold fast that which is good. And thy own word by the same expressions, encourages this holy practice. I have, therefore, been long searching into this divine doctrine, that I may pay thee due honor with understanding. Surely I ought to know the God whom I worship, whether he be one pure and simple being, or whether thou art a three fold Deity, consisting of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Dear and blessed God, hadst thou been pleased, in any one plain scripture, to have informed me which of the different opinions about the holy Trinity, among the contending parties of christians, had been true, thou knowest with how much zeal, satisfaction and joy my unbiassed heart would have opened itself to receive and embrace the divine discovery. Hadst thou told me plainly, in one single text, that the Father, Son and holy Spirit, are three real distinct persons in thy divine nature, I had never suffered myself to be bewildered in so many doubts,

nor embarassed with so many strong fears of assenting to the mere inventions of men, instead of divine doctrine ; but I should have humbly and immediately accepted thy words, so far as it was possible for me to understand them as the only rule of my faith. Or, hadst thou been pleased to express and include this proposition in the several scattered parts of thy book, from whence my reason and conscience might with ease find out, and with certainty infer this doctrine, I should have joyfully employed all my reasoning powers, with their utmost skill and activity, to have found out this inference, and ingrafted it into my soul. But how can such weak creatures (men) ever take in so strange, so difficult, and so abstruse a doctrine as this, in the explication and defence whereof, multitudes of men, even men of learning and piety, have lost themselves in infinite subtleties of dispute, and endless mazes of darkness ?

Thou art witness, O my God, with what diligence, with what constancy and care, I have read and searched thy holy word, how early and late, by night and by day, I have been making these enquiries. How fervently have I been seeking thee on my bended knees, and directing my humble addresses to thee, to enlighten my darkness, and to shew me the meaning of thy word, that I may learn what I must believe, and what I must practice with regard to this doctrine, in order to please thee, and obtain eternal life.

I humbly call thee to witness, O my God, what a holy jealousy I ever wear about my heart, lest I should do the slightest dishonor to thy supreme Majesty, in any of my enquiries or determinations. Thou seest what a religious fear, and what a tender solicitude I maintain on my soul, lest I should think or speak any thing to diminish the grandeurs and honors of thy Son Jesus, my dear mediator, to whom I owe my everlasting hopes. Thou knowest how much afraid I am of speaking one word, which may be construed into a neglect of thy blessed Spirit. Guard all the motions of my mind, O almighty God, against every thing that borders upon these dangers. Forbid my thoughts to indulge, and forbid my pen to write one word, that should sink those grand ideas which belong to thyself, or to thy Son, or thy holy Spirit. Forbid it, O my God, that ever I should be so unhappy as to unglorify my Father, my Savior, or my Sanctifier, in any of my sentiments or expressions concerning them.

Blessed and faithful God, am I not truly sensible of my own darkness and weakness, my dangerous prejudices on every side, and my utter insufficiency for my own conduct ? Wilt thou leave such a poor creature bewildered among a thousand perplexities, which are raised by various opinions and contrivances of men to explain thy divine truth ?

Help me, heavenly Father, for I am quite tired and weary of these human explainings, so various and uncertain. When wilt thou explain it to me thyself, O my God, by the secret and certain dictates of thy Spirit, according to the intimations of thy word? nor let any pride of reason, nor any affectation of novelty, nor any criminal bias whatsoever, turn my heart aside from hearkening to these divine dictates of thy word, and thy Spirit. Suffer not any of my native corruptions, nor the vanity of my imaginations to cast a mist over my eyes, while I am searching after the knowledge of thy mind and will, for my eternal salvation.

I entreat, O most merciful Father, that thou wilt not suffer the remnant of my short life to be wasted in such endless wanderings, in quest of thee or thy Son Jesus, as a great part of my days have been; but let my sincere endeavors to know thee, in all the ways whereby thou hast discovered thyself in thy word, be crowned with such success, that my soul being established in every needful truth by thy holy Spirit, I may spend my remaining life according to the rules of thy gospel, and may with all the holy and happy creation ascribe glory and honor, wisdom and power to thee, who sittest upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

N. B. The address of which the above are extracts was prefixed by Dr. Watts to some pieces he had written in the Trinitarian controversy, which his executors did not judge necessary to publish.—Some of the sentiments which it contains, are different from those he entertained at an earlier period of his life.

Weymouth, Feb. 20th, 1815.

REV. SIR,

YOUR communication of the 3d instant, I received, a few days since, and have read it repeatedly, with attention, and hope not altogether in vain. Seldom have I read any document which has more deeply impressed my mind with the humiliating truth that we are not exactly what we should be, considered as men, as christians, and particularly as christian ministers. This is a subject for lamentation, and I trust we both feel it to be so in relation to ourselves. Sensible of delinquency in respect both to God and man, do we not find frequent occasion, to implore the divine forgiveness; and to ask of our fellow men the exercise of that charity towards us, which hides or passes over a multitude of faults? And are not existing circumstances sometimes such, as to make it our duty to administer reproof to each other, with a spirit of meekness and wisdom; and, in the discharge of this friendly though unpleasant duty, "to speak the truth in love." However in relation to some other subjects we may disagree, with respect to *these*, it is presumed, that we harmonize in sentiment. If, then, we "know these things, happy are we if we do them." This, indeed, we profess to do. But how nearly our practice corresponds with our profession, *we* may not be the most correct judges. We each think the other erroneous in opinion and blameable in conduct; and that there is too much reason for this, neither of us, I presume, will be likely to question. But while we attach blame to each other, it is very possible, and indeed highly probable, that we are too blind, and too partial to our own faults.

These suggestions, sir, are partly the result of the attention which I have given to your extraordinary, but I am willing to believe, friendly letter. Viewing it as having been written with a fraternal and benevolent *design*, I offer you my sincere and grateful acknowledgments. But viewing it as containing several things incorrect and exceptionable, christian fidelity seems to require that I should particularly notice them. In doing this it will be my object to act, as well the friendly, as the faithful part. I hope not to irritate, but as a "beloved" brother, I am constrained "to warn you." * * * * * * * * * * * *
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In the last paragraph, but one, of your letter, you observe,—"It is solely on account of the ground you have taken with relation to Christ and to the Holy Spirit, that I have been constrained to suspend exchanges with you." It is with no small satisfaction, sir, that I find the "difficulties subsisting between us" are reduced to so narrow a compass, and especially as I had apprehended you viewed my sentiments in relation to sin and human creeds as grossly erroneous and heretical. If I understand the import of the above quotation, you do not think me an errorist in sentiment with respect to these subjects, nor with respect to the character of the one God, even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. I have a right at least to conclude that you do not consider me fundamentally, or in any high degree erroneous, respecting these or any other theological sentiments, excepting those which relate to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.—If I really understand you, as I most sincerely hope I do, I cannot think that "we so widely differ" in sentiment as you seem to imagine; nor can I believe, when you better understand the "difference," that you will be so confident as you now seem to be, "that I have embraced most dangerous and destructive errors,"—errors which are "subversive of the gospel of Christ," and which "tend to drown men in destruction and perdition."

The point being thus happily settled, that no dividing difference in sentiment between us exists, with respect to the character of *God even the Father*, I must conclude that we harmonize, or nearly harmonize in sentiment with relation to "the Holy Spirit." Do you believe, sir, that the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God is self-existent, eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscent, infinite in holiness, in truth, in goodness? I am persuaded that you do believe this. But *you* cannot more firmly believe it than *I do*. In what then does the important difference between us, with respect to the Holy Spirit, consist? If in any degree we differ in opinion on this subject, the difference I am persuaded is very inconsiderable; nor is it unlikely that it consists *wholly*, or *almost* wholly in *words*.—In this connection I would further observe, that I do not consider the Holy Spirit as *a being distinct* from the *one God*; nor, unless I am under a great mistake, do you believe this. What then, let me ask, is the great and very dangerous error into which, in your estimation, I have fallen respecting the character of the Holy Spirit? I would rather ask, is there *any thing* in what I *believe*, or in what I do *not* believe with respect to this subject, in which you can reasonably discover either *danger* or *heresy*? Here, sir, permit me to remind you, that you have explicitly declared, that you "have *not* misrepresented my sentiments, either to your own people, or to any others." Nor do I *accuse* you of having done it. But if you have made any representation

which *clashes* with my sentiments, as above stated, *you have most grossly misrepresented them.* To your own conscience I appeal for decision.

How widely we differ in sentiment "with relation to Christ," I do not certainly know. The difference may be very considerable.—If a Trinitarian, agreeably to the doctrine of the Trinity as stated in the Assembly's Catechism, you believe that Jesus Christ in his lowest character, as you express it, is *properly* a *man* consisting of a "true body and reasonable soul;" who was *created* and born about eighteen centuries past. Here, I acknowledge, that I do not agree with you in sentiment.—I consider Jesus Christ as possessing no character which is *lower* than that implied in his being "God's *fellow*," and the *brightness* of the "Fathers glory and the *express image* of his person;" or than that which is implied in any other *name or title ascribed to him in the Bible.* I believe also, that in this character he existed "in the beginning with God," even before the foundation of the world. Excepting as to his *body*, I believe that no lower character than that above stated is to be ascribed to Christ the Lord of glory. I believe also, that the only living and true God, even the Father, is in the *most intimate manner*, united to this same Lord Jesus Christ, insomuch that it is proper to speak of them as *one*; not however as one *person* or *being*, but as one in *consent, affection, design, and pursuit. You* believe also, if I understand you, that the One God, or the independent Jehovah is, in the most intimate manner, united to Jesus Christ, in what you call his lowest character; that is, to a *real and proper man.* This, then, as I understand the subject, is the difference between us—that person or being called Christ, to whom I consider the One God as united, is unspeakably greater, more excellent and illustrious, than that Christ to whom you consider the One God as united.—In other words, Christ, in what you consider his lowest nature, is unspeakably inferior as to existence, and excellence, and glory of character, to the Christ, to whom I consider the One God as united. This statement, I consider strictly correct. Nor do I think you can reasonably deny that it is so. You will say, however, that I have not stated the whole truth; because you believe "that Christ, in his highest character, is, the Supreme Deity."—I readily admit, that this is your representation of the subject. But whether our sentiments on *this point* are really discordant, I am not a little doubtful. Indeed I strongly suspect that the only difference in our sentiments respecting what you call the *highest character* of Christ, is rather *seeming* than *real*; that it consists rather in words or *mode of representation* than *in ideas.* —Do you not believe that there is but one "Supreme Deity?" That you do indeed believe this, you will not I presume deny.

Do you not believe also that this same Supreme Deity is united to proper man, the man Christ Jesus?—Should you endeavor to evade the question by saying you believe that the *second person* in the Trinity is united to the man Jesus, you will permit me to ask whether you believe that the second person in the Trinity is the *Supreme Deity?* Your answer must be either negative, or affirmative. If you should deny that the second person in the Trinity is the Supreme Deity, you surely will not plead that the man Christ Jesus, is in his highest character, the Supreme Deity. The Supreme Deity then, who is but *One*, is united, according to your own theory, if I understand it, to a real or proper man—a *creature* who began to exist in the reign of Cesar Augustus. But did this union produce any change or alteration in the nature or character of the man? Or were the two natures or characters in any degree blended or intermixed? Did the *Divinity*, in *any degree*, become *humanity?* or did *humanity*, in *any degree*, become *Divinity?* In a word, did not Divinity and humanity, or the Supreme Deity and the proper man remain the same *precisely*, as to nature or character *after*, as *before* the *union took place?* All this I am persuaded you ought, as you probably do, admit. What then, do you mean by the highest character of Christ? Do you mean any thing more than the *One Supreme Deity*, as united to the man Jesus? If this be your meaning, (and I see not but it must be,) in what does the difference in sentiment between us, respecting what you call the highest character of Christ, consist? I confess that I can discover none but that which consists in *difference of words, or mode of representation.* If it be proper to say that Jesus Christ in his highest character, is the Supreme Deity, *because the Supreme Deity is united to him*, I am as firm a believer in the Divinity of Christ, or that in his highest character he is the Supreme Deity, as you are or possibly can be. I do think, however, that this mode of representation is highly improper, as it has a tendency greatly to confuse and mislead the mind, and, as I think, to cherish a fondness and superstitious reverence for that kind of mystery, which, I am persuaded, has the approbation *neither of enlightened reason, nor of the pure unadulterated revelation of God.* What would you say, sir, were I to represent the *christian* as possessing two natures, human and Divine; as being properly a man, and yet the Supreme Deity? But are not Christians "partakers of "*the Divine Nature?* Is it not also the prayer of Christ, to his Father, "that" they "may may be one in us?"—united both to himself and to his Father? Were I to assert that the christian is as well the *Supreme Deity*, as a man, because the Supreme Deity is *united to him*, you would consider the assertion, I presume, very unreasonable, and even highly impious.

But have I not *precisely* the same reason for making this assertion, which you have, for asserting that Christ, being properly a man, is also the Supreme Deity, because the Supreme Deity is united to him? I can see no reason, I confess, why *one good man* should not as well become Divinity, by virtue of the union under consideration, as *another good man*. If you can assign a reason which possesses any weight, why this should not be the case, I will sincerely thank you, if you will do it. But until I shall be favored with such a reason, I must consider your "highest character of Christ," as existing only in *imagination* and *human device*, or in a highly figurative and *mysterious* sense.

As it is "*solely* on account of the ground I have taken with relation to Christ and the Holy Spirit, that you have been constrained to suspend exchanges with me," I pray you very seriously and carefully to review that ground, and your conduct "on account" of it.—You do not refuse to exchange with me on account of any real or supposed difference in opinion, which may exist between us with respect to the character of the One God, the Father of Christ. Am I then to attribute this your refusal, to my belief that the "Holy Spirit" is self-existent, eternal, &c. and that this same Spirit is not a being distinct from the One God? This my belief, if I am to credit your assertion is, *in part*, the ground or reason of your rejecting me as erroneous in sentiment, even to the subversion of the gospel of Christ. The *other part* of that ground or reason for this is, that I believe Jesus Christ possesses no lower character than that which the highest titles and attributes ascribed to him in the Bible import, and that the One God, the Supreme Jehovah, is as intimately united to him, as you can suppose him to be united to a creature, whose existence can be traced but a few centuries back.—The only real difference, Sir, which I can perceive between your views and mine, "with respect to Christ, is this—your view makes him a holy man—a *creature* of moderate antiquity, and *nothing more*; whereas my view carries back his antiquity before creation, representing his dignity and glory as *great beyond expression—beyond conception.*" I well know, you will not admit that you thus *degrade* the character of Jesus, the Lord of glory. But that you *really do*, is my settled belief. And that it is utterly beyond your power to make it appear otherwise, I am fully persuaded. The recourse which you may have to *mystery*, in relation to this subject, will be unavailable to your purpose with men of reflection, who are not under the influence of strong prepossessions, and who like the Apostle, duly appreciate words spoken with the *understanding*. Nor will this same word mystery retain, I am persuaded, for any considerable length of

time, its *sacred character*, its *vast importance*, and its *convenient use*.

If I have not fairly exhibited the ground, on account of which you have set me at nought as a minister of Christ, it is not for want of disposition, but ability. And you will permit me to add, that if you have ever represented me to "your people, or others," as maintaining sentiments "with respect to Christ and the Holy Spirit," discordant with those which I have now stated, you have most injuriously misrepresented me; and you will, I am persuaded, if you possess that charity, as you ought, which is "kind" and "rejoiceth in the truth," do every thing in your power, with *promptitude* and *cheerfulness*, to remove the injury. As you have an *understanding* to *reflect*, so, I hope you have *conscience* to *feel*, and a *disposition* to *do*, whatever the nature of the case may require.

But you have, perhaps, *other reasons* aside from, or rather branches of, the *sole reason* you mention, on account of which you have been "constrained to suspend exchanges with me." I will suggest then, whether the following considerations have not had some influence in deciding you to act the part, which you have done, in relation to your brother, viz.—My *neglect* to use *unscriptural ascriptions* or *doxologies* at the close of my public prayers—my *neglect* to use with approbation the *unscriptural word*, *Trinity*—my *neglect* thus to use the *unscriptural expression*, *three persons* with respect to the *One God*—my *neglect* to use the *unscriptural declaration*, "these *three* are *One God*, *the same in substance*, *equal in power and glory*"—my *neglect* to use the following *unscriptural expressions* respecting Christ—"being the *eternal Son* of God, *became man;*" yet being the *Son* of God, "was, and continues to be *God* and *man*," and *one person* forever;—and yet, notwithstanding he is both the *Son* of God, and *God himself*, he was "*conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, and born of a virgin!*"—These unscriptural, and as it appears to me, *anti*-scriptural words and phrases, I do neglect, I frankly acknowledge, to use with approbation; some of which I do not hesitate to say appear to my understanding utterly *repugnant* to every dictate of *sober reason*, and highly *dishonorable* to the character of a *venerable assembly of divines*.—I will add, sir, that I do not advocate the sentiment, that the *self-existent*, *unchangeable and blessed God*, tabernacled in flesh for more than thirty years; that he passed through a series of *poverty* and *sufferings*, and then *died* upon the cross to make an infinite atonement for sin; nor do I teach or believe the doctrine, that such an atonement was made, or could have been made by the sufferings of a *man*, whose existence had measured the short space of but a few years; neither do I teach that God and man

united, so as to constitute one complex being, suffered and died to make an infinite atonement; for. so far as I can see, if such a complex being, or person suffered and died, *God* as well as man, or, *divinity* as well as humanity, must, at the same time, have passed through suffering and death.—Whether these things are included in your general reason for suspending exchanges with me, or whether I am to consider them as auxiliary reasons, you, sir, "best can tell."

Permit me now, to solicit your attention to several things in which I consider you and others as deeply concerned; and let me entreat you very seriously to examine, and reflect upon them. You "verily believe, that those who deny the supreme Deity of Jesus Christ, however exalted a being they may suppose him to be, are in a great and dangerous error." From this declaration I am undoubtedly to infer, that you verily believe, that Jesus Christ is indeed the Supreme Deity. But what, sir, am I to understand by this your belief? that the *man* Christ, a *creature*, is *Supreme Deity!* If not, I would ask whether you consider this creature as constituting *any part* or *portion* of the Divine Essence or Supreme Deity? This I presume you will not admit. In speaking of Jesus Christ, then, as the Supreme Deity, you can consistently have no reference to what you call the humanity or created nature of Christ. I cannot suppose that you are so destitute of discernment as to believe that a *created being* is an *uncreated being*, or that a *creature* is the *Creator?* When, therefore, you speak of Jesus Christ as Supreme Deity, you do not mean the *man* Jesus Christ; but the *Creator* of the man Jesus Christ. Although I consider this *mode* of representation as very incongruous; yet the *idea*, which I understand as conveyed by it, has *my full and unwavering credence.* And that you should ever have supposed or insinuated, that I do not believe, that the *Creator* of the man Jesus Christ is the *Supreme Deity*, is not a little astonishing!—But perhaps you will say, that by the Supreme Deity of Jesus Christ you mean the *second person* in the Trinity. Should you resort to this expedient as an explanation of your meaning, I would ask, what do you mean by the second person in the Trinity, but that One God aside from whom there is none else? Is there more than One "Supreme Deity?" If not, and if the *second* person in the Trinity be that One Supreme Deity, then surely neither the *first* nor the *third* person in the Trinity can have any claim to the character of Supreme Deity. I see not, sir, but you completely *annihilate* the existence of the *God and Father* of Christ, and of the *Holy Spirit*, by advocating the sentiment that Christ is the Supreme Deity; unless you admit the existence of *three such Deities!* And that you really do advocate this *tritheistical* and shocking absurdity (but I presume without designing it) I know not how to disbelieve. Do you not believe, sir, that the

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is "the Supreme Deity?" Do you not also believe that the Holy Spirit, as a person distinguished from God the Father, and the Son, is "the Supreme Deity?" Are there not then three Supreme Deities, according to your theory? I well know that you will deny this consequence; but I certainly do not know any reason, either weighty or intelligible, which you can assign for this your denial. If *three Supreme Deities* are not *three Supreme Gods*, words, so far as I can see, must cease to be correct signs of ideas. Or if *three* Supreme Deities constitute but *one* Supreme Deity, or *one* Supreme God, *how* I desire to know am I to believe, or *can* I believe the *more* than mysterious doctrine? If I have recourse to reason, reason denies the doctrine. If I have recourse to the Bible, the Bible seems very emphatically to deny it.

But perhaps you will say that you do not mean to advocate the doctrine that there are three *distinct* Supreme Deities; but three *conjoint* Supreme Deities. Should you say this, you but use words without knowledge, at least with respect to myself. You will, probably, however, say that your meaning is, that "there are *three persons* in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." But be not offended if I ask, what do you *mean* by *persons?* I do not ask the question with a captious spirit, or, so far as I know my own heart, from any improper design. I ask the question because I really do not know what is meant by the *Trinitarian* word persons; nor do I think I should be uncharitable were I to say that I am strongly apprehensive that Trinitarians themselves do not know. How can I think otherwise, when for *persons* I find substituted by way of explanation, *agents* or *agenius*, distinct persons in a *philosophical sense—divine natures—names—offices—understanding, willing, loving;* or *wisdom, power*, and *love, eternal spirits*, or *intelligent hypostacies*—equal and distinct *independencies—modal distinctions*—three *somethings*, &c. I pray you, sir, to tell me what am I to understand by these strange explications of "persons" if it be in your power. But if you cannot, why do you use them or any of them, but to render "*confusion* worse *confounded!*" Are not these "subtleties of expression studied by their inventors, rather to *conceal*, than *explain* their sentiments!" But whether these expressions are calculated to elucidate or "darken counsel," or whatever may be meant by "three persons in the Godhead," yet you admit and advocate the sentiment that they are equal "to each other, in power and glory."—Here, then, let me ask, what are the power and glory of the person of the Father? Do they not consist in all possible, and infinite perfections both natural and moral? Must you not admit then, that the person of the Son

possesses these same infinite perfections ; and that the person of the Holy Ghost, or Spirit, also possesses them ! But is not a *person* possessed of all infinite perfections, natural and moral, an infinite *Being* or *God ?* Must there not then according to your theory, be three infinite Beings or Gods ? I see not, how this conclusion can possibly be evaded. Will you content yourself and endeavor to satisfy the minds of others by saying the subject is an unintelligible mystery ? I pray you, sir, to avoid this *deceptive, blinding, dangerous expedient.* Will you plead that an *unintelligible* mystery is stated in the Bible, and proposed as a *fundamental* article of belief, and that *not* believing it, is "subversive of the gospel of Christ!" And will you require plain and unlearned christians to give their assent to a doctrine, as a term of christian communion, which neither you nor any other man is able to explain, or understand ! There is *that,* sir, in this business I am constrained to say, which to my mind is *inexpressibly shocking.* Were the all good and merciful God to require of his creatures to believe in an unintelligible doctrine, as a term of admission into heaven, *who, then, would be saved ?* for, *who can believe that which is unintelligible, or incapable of being believed !*

But perhaps you will say, that in advocating the doctrine of three persons in one God, you do not mean to support the doctrine of three *beings* in one God, but only three *sets* or *classes* of *infinite perfections* in one God. Should you say this, which is probably the most plausible thing you can say, I should be better able perhaps to understand your meaning, but no better satisfied with your theory. To me, sir, it is extremely difficult to conceive of three self existent and independent *omnipotencies, omnipresencies, omniciences,* &c. without applying them to three distinct beings, or Gods. But let it be admitted as possible, that three classes of infinite perfections can exist in and belong to one being or God only ; yet is not the supposition a very *wild* and *extravagant one ?* Is the supposition founded either in scripture or reason ? But admitting that neither scripture nor reason denies the *possibility* of the hypothesis, yet is it conceivable that the one God can, *in any respect* be more perfect, or glorious, or more an object of homage, love and obedience, with three classes or sets of infinite perfections, than with one class or set only ? Besides, I would ask whether these three supposed classes or sets of infinite perfections are at the *same time* and *always* in a state of *operative existence !*

Perhaps, you are shocked with these enquiries, and are ready so exclaim *impious ! blasphemous !* Should this be the case, I certainly shall not be disappointed. The ideas contained in these queries are *indeed shocking* ; at least, they appear to me so. But if you deny the existence of three distinct Supreme Deities or Gods, I see not but these ideas, shocking as

they are, must be attributed to your theory of the Trinity. If this theory teaches *neither* the doctrine of three Supreme Beings or God's, *nor* the doctrine of three classes or sets of infinite perfections in One God, *what* I would ask, *does* it *teach?* Is it so sublime and sacred a mystery, as neither to be understood, nor explained? Why then do you *profess* to believe it? If *you* can honestly, and to edification, do this for *yourself*, is it reasonable, is it justifiable, that you should oblige *others* to do it, or in case they do not, denounce them as heretics, and subverters of the gospel? I say *profess* to believe it; for what more can it be than *merely* to profess or pretend to believe a doctrine, the import of which *we neither do, nor possibly can understand!* But you will say, whether we do, or do not understand it, yet the doctrine is a most important and *fundamental verity*, and therefore we *must* believe it, in order to be real christians, and meet the Divine approbation and acceptance. But, sir, on the supposition that the doctrine is *false*, how can *you* expect to meet the approbation of your Judge, when you shall be called to render an account of your stewardship, for believing falsehood; for requiring your fellow servants to believe falsehood; and for rejecting them as heretics, for not believing it, and for refusing to *profess* to believe it? This is a very serious and solemn question, and demands your very serious and solemn consideration. But that it is *possible* your sentiments respecting the doctrine of the Trinity, and particularly respecting the character of Christ *are* false, you will *possibly* admit. And that they *really are false*, is to say the least, in my opinion, *very highly probable.* That three persons equal in power and glory; exist in, or constitute one God, seems incredible. To find, and understand this mysterious doctrine, I have with care examined the scriptures, which I endeavored to do with an unprejudiced mind. But this examination has not resulted as I could wish, if the doctrine be indeed a *revealed truth.* I have also read with attention the most orthodox, learned and distinguished writers on the subject; but without finding the light and evidence in support of its truth, which is necessary to satisfy my mind.

All these writers seem to admit, as an unquestionable truth, that there is but one Supreme God. Yet they profess to believe and strenuously indeavor to prove, that this One Supreme God consists of three persons, equal in all possible perfections. They also profess to believe and endeavor to prove, if I understand them, that each of these persons is in the *highest sense* God! Do you find no difficulty, sir, in reconciling this *apparent contradiction.* If the person of the Father be Supreme God, and if the person of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit be Supreme God, I cannot see, I confess, but there must be three Supreme Gods. But is it not *impossible* that three Supreme Gods,

or supreme persons should exist! A *supreme being* or person, is a being or person *higher* in dignity or authority *than all others*. There can of course then, be but *one* such being or person. But these writers expressly say, that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are *each* the Supreme God or Jehovah. But what is this, but to say that *each* is the *highest God* or being in the universe, and that *each* is *higher than the others!* I well know that they will not admit this conclusion. Why then do they express themselves in such a manner as to make the conclusion, *shocking* as it is, seemingly *necessary?* You, sir, speak of Jesus Christ as "the Supreme Deity." And to believe that he is not, is, in your estimation, to subvert the Gospel. But if I believe that Jesus Christ is the Supreme Deity, or the highest person or being in the universe, can I, or can you, consistently believe, that either of the other persons in the Trinity is the Supreme Deity, or the highest person or being in the universe! can any person or Deity be *higher* than the *highest* person or deity! But perhaps you will say that the advocates of the doctrine of the Trinity do not admit that *each* of the persons is *separately* the Supreme Deity, but that the *three persons conjointly* constitute the Supreme Deity? Why then, let me ask, do they expressly say of each, that *he* is the Supreme Deity—the Supreme God—the self-existent and independent Jehovah, &c.? Are not these expressions calculated to impress the mind of the reader or hearer with the idea, that there are three Supreme and independent Gods? Can they be justified then, or can you justify yourself in the use of such highly improper, and as it seems to me, deceptive expressions? But if nothing more be meant by these extraordinary expressions than that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, *unitedly* constitute the One Supreme God, permit me to ask whether, for the truth of this sentiment, you find satisfactory evidence in the Bible? Does not this inspired book assure us, that the *person* of the *Father* constitutes the *one* and the *only Supreme God?* "To us there is but *One God*, the *Father*." And is not this One God, the God and *Father* of Jesus Christ, who expressly said, "My Father is *greater* than *I*—greater than *all?*" Besides, who but the person of the Father knows the precise time when the day of judgment will take place? "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, (no *one*,) no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the *Son*, but the *Father*." Has Jesus Christ directed us to pray to any other person, as the Supreme God, but the *person* of the *Father?* Did not Christ himself pray to his *Father* as the *Supreme God*—Did he not pray that his *Father* would restore to him the glory which he had possessed before his incarnation? "O *Father*, glorify thou me with thine *own self*, with the glory I had with thee before the world was." Are these things, consistent with the doctrine which supposes that

three equal, infinite and independent *persons* exist in and constitute One God! Besides, is it not difficult to reconcile with this sentiment, the numerous passages of scripture which represent Jesus Christ as the *Son* of God; as *receiving life* or *existence* from his Father; as receiving *gifts and blessings* from his Father; as *submitting* to and *obeying* the will and authority of his Father; as being his Father's *agent*—as becoming *poor*, although *he had been rich?* Can you satisfactorily to your own mind, reconcile these and many other similar representations of Jesus Christ, with the doctrine of his strict equality with his Father? Should you say that these representations have respect to his *human nature* or *manhood*, yet will you not find it difficult to reconcile with *Supreme Divinity* the *highest* representations which are made of him? Is he represented as God's fellow? Yet did not God *smite* and *bruise* this his fellow in his crucifixion? Is he represented as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person? Yet does not an *image*, however express or exact, imply something very *distinct* and *different* from and even superior to the object represented? Because Adam was made in the image of God, it by no means follows that he was the very God, whose image he bore. Is Christ represented as king? Yet was he not *constituted* king, and by his Father *set* on his holy hill of Zion? Is he represented as possessing a kingdom? Yet was not that kingdom *committed* to him by his Father? and is he not, at some future period, to *give up* the kingdom to the Father, that God may all in all? Is Christ an object of worship? But is he not to be worshipped as a being, whom God hath *highly exalted?* And is not the worship or homage to be paid him, to *terminate* on the *Father* as the *prime and ultimate object?* If we are to honor the Son as we are to honor the Father, is it not for this express reason, "that the Father hath *committed all judgment unto him.*" Besides is he not to be worshipped as the *first begotten* of the Father, and as the *Lamb that was slain?* Does he possess all power in heaven and in earth? But was not this power *given* him? Did he create the world? But did he not do this as the *agent* of his Father? God created the world by, or through Jesus Christ. Will Christ judge the world? But he is *constituted Judge* by his Father, who committed all judgment unto him? Did all the fulness of the Godhead dwell in him? Yet this was by the *pleasure* of the Father. Besides, are not *Christians* filled, or capable of being filled "with all the fulness of God." Did Christ partake of the Divine nature? and are not *Christians* represented as *partaking* of the same nature? Did Christ possess knowledge of the human heart? but did not *Peter know the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira?* Does Christ possess knowledge adequate to judge the world? but will not *Christians also judge the*

world and even angels? could Christ be present with those who were gathered together in his name, when he was absent from them as to his body? could not *Paul*, also, in *spirit*, be present with the Corinthian church, although *absent* in body, when they were gathered together to inflict disciplinary punishment on an offending brother? Is Christ denominated God? but are not *angels* and *magistrates* expressly spoken of as *Gods*, and by *God himself?* Will you say that these Gods had a God over them? but had not Christ, *as God, a God over him?* "But unto the Son he (the Father) saith, thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom; thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore, God, even THY God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."—What, sir, shall we say to these things? Shall we peremptorily say, that they furnish ample evidence in support of the Supreme Deity of Jesus Christ? But if the titles and attributes above noticed, as ascribed to Christ, do not prove his absolute Divinity, *none* which are ascribed to him in in the *Bible*, it is believed, will furnish satisfactory evidence in proof of it. But can we reasonably believe that those titles and attributes, viewed in connexion with their accompanying circumstances, do establish the doctrine, that Jesus Christ is the Supreme Deity? Although I will not possitively say they do not; yet I am constrained to say, that they do not, to my mind, furnish satisfactory proof. But perhaps you will say, that the titles and attributes ascribed to Christ, belong *neither* to his *highest*, *nor* to his *lowest character*, considered as *such*, but to his complex character, as *God and man*. Should you say this, will you not "darken counsel with words without knowledge?"

If Jesus Christ is not the Supreme Deity, you will admit that the doctrine of the Trinity, in your view of the subject, is not true. But if this doctrine were true, is it not strange that Jesus Christ should, while on earth, have prayed to the *person* of Father as the *one God*—that he should have directed us thus to pray to him—that we should find *neither precept nor example* for praying to a *Three-One-God?*—and that to such a God *no doxology* should be found in *any part of the sacred Scriptures?* As these are very important considerations, it becomes us very seriously to weigh and ponder them in "our hearts."

In this connection permit me to ask, whether you do not admit that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be supported, if Jesus Christ is any other than that being, who is styled his Father? This, you must and I presume do admit; for you will not say that Jesus Christ is "the Supreme Deity" and yet but a *part* of the Supreme Deity! But if Jesus Christ is the same being as God, the Father, how then is he his *son*—his *heir*—his *servant*—his *anointed*, or *Christ*—his *angel*, or *messenger*—

his *chosen*, or *elect*—his *gift*—his *image*—the mediator *between* God and man—his only *begotten*—his *prophet?*—Do not all these names and titles belong to the person of Jesus Christ? Must he not then, if words are correct images of ideas, be a person or being *distinct* from the one God, his Father, and *as distinct* as any *other two beings?* But against this suggestion you will perhaps urge the testimony of Christ—"I and my Father are one." This testimony you may think sufficient for your purpose. But a little reflection on the subject must convince you, I should think, that it is *very far* from being so. Christ and his Father were *one*, *as*, and *even as* Christians are *one* Now, as this oneness between Christians is only of a *moral* nature, must not the oneness between Christ and his Father be of the same nature? But not to insist on this, you will permit me to ask—are Christ and his Father *one person?* This you will not admit, as it would destroy the doctrine of *three persons* in one God. Will you then say, that they are *one being?* This, I suppose you do say. But do you not perceive, that in saying this, you must be obliged, to be consistent with yourself, to *deny the doctrine of the Trinity?* for, if the *persons* of the *Son* and *Father* constitute *one being*, or the *one God*, the *Holy Spirit is necessarily excluded.* You surely will not say that there are *three* persons existing in that being, who is constituted of but *two* persons! But leaving the testimony of Christ, you will perhaps avail yourself of that of John, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." Not to insist that this text is probably surreptitious, or an interpolation, I would ask you as a Trinitarian, what do you understand by the term *three* in this passage? Will you say, *persons?* Must you not then, to be consistent, be obliged to say that these *three persons* are *one person!* But this you must perceive would destroy the doctrine of the Trinity. Will you then say, that the word *Gods* must be supplied to explain the meaning of the term *three?* But if you admit that the word Gods is to be supplied, do you not perceive that the *three Gods* must be *one God!* A very little attention to the subject will convince you, I should think, that this celebrated text, on which so much dependance is placed, as proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, is very far from furnishing the proof for which it is so often produced.

But if the testimony of Christ and the declaration of his beloved disciple, do not illustrate or support the doctrine of the Trinity, as a little reflection must, I should think convince you that they do not, will you urge in support of it, that Christ "thought it not robbery to be equal with God!" Much reliance, I am sensible, is placed by Trinitarian writers on this text, as furnishing strong and irresistable evidence in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the Supreme Deity of Christ.

But that it really does furnish this evidence cannot, it is confidently believed, be reasonably admitted.—The text, as it stands in the common version, it is highly probable, is *widely* different from the original.—The word rendered *equal*, it is well known, might with the greatest propriety be translated by the word *as*, or *like ;* and who that has duly attended to the subject, does not know that the word *equal*, is *never* used in scripture, to express *perfect equality* between persons. Besides, is it not a truth, which cannot be successfully opposed, that no two persons or things in the universe are strictly, or in all respects, equal the one to the other? This is a truth, which, I presume, you will readily admit in every case, excepting that which is now under consideration. The late Dr. Edwards, if I mistake not, has illustrated and established this truth in the most luminous and convincing manner. Nor do I see but the late Dr. Hopkins, (without designing it) has in the same luminous and convincing manner proved the unity of God, with respect as well to *person*, as *being*. "There can be," he observes (System, vol. 1st. 2d. ed. p. 77,) but one infinite being. To suppose another, or a second, necessarily excludes the first, and to suppose the first, necessarily excludes the second, and any other infinite being. The same is evident from the consideration of the divine perfections: God is infinite power, infinite wisdom: but there cannot be two or more infinite wisdoms, &c. because this is a contradiction. Moreover, if we make the impossible supposition, that there are two or more infinite beings, they must be perfectly alike in all respects, or not. If not perfectly alike and without any difference in any respect, then one or the other must be imperfect; for absolutely infinite perfection admits of no variation, or difference; so that if any two beings differ in any respect, they cannot both be absolutely perfect; therefore cannot both be God, &c. Yea, it is so far from being desirable, that there should be more Gods than one, were it possible, that it is most undesirable, and would be the greatest evil. Such a supposition would only tend to perplex the pious mind, not knowing which of the Gods he did worship, or what God to love and adore, or in which to put his trust."—These observations of the Doctor I consider as perfectly correct, nor, so far as I can see, does their correctness admit of reasonable dispute; but how they can be reconciled with the doctrine of the Trinity, is utterly beyond my comprehension. If "there can be but one infinite *being*," can there be more than one infinite *person!* If so, let some reason be assigned for it. If "there cannot be *two infinite wisdoms*," is not the existence of *two infinitely wise persons* an impossibility? If "two or more infinite *beings* are not perfectly alike, then, one or the other must be *imperfect*." But is it not equally true, that if two or more infinite *persons* are not per-

fectly alike, one or the other must be *imperfect?* Are the three persons in the Trinity then, perfectly alike. and "without any difference in any respect?" If not, "one or the other must be imperfect." If two or more infinite *beings* perfectly alike, are perfectly *one and the same being;*" must not two or more infinite *persons*, being perfectly alike, be perfectly *one and the same person!* Besides, if the supposition, that there are two or more infinite *beings* "would only tend to *perplex* the pious mind;"—if it would make a person of such a mind *doubtful* "which of the Gods he did worship, or what God to love and adore, or in which to put his trust;" will not the supposition also, that there are two or more infinite *persons*, tend, equally, thus to *perplex* the pious mind? If the persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be infinite persons, equal in power and glory, must not *your* mind, sir, be greatly perplexed about the subject? Can you satisfactorily determine whether you are "to worship, love and adore" *either* of these persons supremely, or *each* of them, in this manner? If *your* mind is not thus perplexed, I must presume that your views of the subject are much more distinct than those of your Trinitarian brethren in general. But if you *have* clear, distinct and satisfactory views of the subject, let me ask, whether you are in the habit of praying to, and worshiping, *distinctly*, the persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and *each* of them as *fully* as the *others?* If not, what reason have you to assign for this your neglect? Are not three persons who are *equal* in power and glory, *equally* entitled to your "worship, love and adoration?" If then you do not address *each*, as the object of prayer, *equally* as the object of prayer, and as *frequently*, do you not treat that person, or those persons, whom you do not thus address, with unjustifiable, ungrateful, and even *impious neglect!* Should you say that it is not enjoined upon you in scripture to pray to the Son and Holy Sprit, as you are required to pray to the person of the Father, I readily admit that you are not. And *this is* undoubtedly a sufficient reason that you should not. *Why* then, in your ascriptions and doxologies do you represent *each* of the persons as having an *equal claim to supreme and undivided worship and adoration!* In your public prayers the appearance most certainly is, that you generally, at least, address, *only* the *person* of the *Father*, and represent Christ as a *distinct* and *subordinate* person or being, and *never* perhaps *address* the Holy Spirit as an *object of prayer*. But when you conclude your public addresses you represent each of the persons as Supreme, and independent; and as equally entitled to the highest worship and homage! But in doing this, you have *neither Scripture, precept, nor example to justify your conduct.* I pray you, sir, very seriously to consider these things, and then say, whether they do not seem to be indicative of great *confusion* in your

own mind?—whether they do not tend very greatly to *perplex* the minds of those, who *profess* to join with you in prayer, and to *prevent* them from *knowing* whom, or what they worship? Permit me, also to ask, whether you can satisfactorily, to your own mind, reconcile this your conduct either with the dictates of *sober reason*, or *revelation?*

As you say nothing *distinctly* in your letter respecting the Father and Holy Spirit, by which I can determine what (if any) is the real difference between us in sentiment with relation to *them*, I shall now solicit your attention more particularly to *Jesus Christ*, whom you believe to be the second person in the Trinity; and in this character, Supreme Deity. Nor will you pretend, I presume, that the doctrine of the Trinity can be supported, but by supporting the truth of this opinion. Here then let me ask, was not the late Dr. Hopkins strictly a Trinitarian, and one of the most able advocates of the doctrine of the Trinity? And will not an essential departure from his view of the doctrine, be an essential departure from the real doctrine of the Trinity, as generally received? This I would presume you will not deny. What then were *his* views of this doctrine, and particularly in relation to the character of Jesus Christ?

DOCTOR SAMUEL HOPKINS,

believed, that "the Word" Logos "and the Son, mean the same;" (p. 78,) that "the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ is God;" (p. 80.) that this title, the Son of God, is the *highest title* that is given to the Redeemer, and denotes his divinity, or that he is himself God, and therefore equal with the Father; (p. 363,) "when the angel," says the Doctor, "who declared to the virgin Mary, that she should be the mother of the Messiah, expressed to her the greatness of this her Son, he does it by saying, that he should be *the Son of the highest*, the Son of God. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the highest. Therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." If this were not his greatest, his highest title and character, he would most certainly have given him a higher, and one that did most fully express divinity. This therefore did express it in the fullest and strongest manner. And no one who believes in the divinity of Christ, can consistently, have any doubt of it. "This is *my beloved* Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." If this does not express his divinity, we may be sure divinity is no part of his character; and that he is not God." (p. 363, 4.)

The Doctor having thus strongly expressed his views of the Son of God, observes (p. 368) "All this will be of no weight, indeed, and as nothing with the Anti-trinitarians, the Sabellians; and with all those who deny the divinity of Jesus Christ;

the Arians and Socinians. But they who believe in a Trinity of persons in the Deity, and that Jesus Christ is God, the second person of the Trinity, must be sensible that he is called the Son of God, the Son of the Father with a special reference to his divine nature, and to denote his Godhead, as the second person in the Triune God. It has been generally believed, and the common doctrine of the church of Christ from the beginning of the fourth century, and so far as appears, from the days of the Apostles to this time, that Jesus Christ is the *eternal* Son of God: that his Sonship is essential to him, as the second person in the Trinity, and that *in this sense*, he is *the only begotten Son of the Father*, antecedent to his incarnation, and independent on it, even from eternity." In page 384, the Doctor observes—"Do not they speak not only *without scripture*, but *contrary to it*, who say, that the first person of the Trinity became a Father by uniting the second person to the human nature, in the womb of the virgin Mary; by which the latter became the only Son of the Father."

By these quotations from Dr. Hopkins you perceive, not only what were his sentiments respecting the doctrine of the Trinity, and particularly respecting the character of the Son of God; but also, what was "the common doctrine of the church from the beginning of the fourth century, to this time." And that these quotations perfectly harmonize with the doctrine of the Trinity, and particularly of the Sonship of Christ as stated in the Assembly's shorter Catechism, you will neither deny nor question. Nor will you deny, nor even question, I presume, that they harmonize with the professed belief of the General Association of Massachusetts and the Theological professors in the Andover Institution, with respect to the Trinity, and the character of the Son of God.

Here, then, permit me to ask—do *you* believe with this great multitude of *orthodox Christians*, from the fourth century down to this day, that the title "*Son* of God is the *highest title* that is given to the Redeemer, and *denotes his divinity*, or that he is himself God, and therefore equal with the Father?" But how can the *Son* of the *Highest* be *equal* to the *Highest?* Can any person or being be *equally high* with that person or being who is the *highest* of *all?* Does not *Son* import *inferiority*, in some respects at least, to him who is his Father? Does not prayer imply dependence in the person praying, on him to whom he addresses prayer? But did not Christ *as Son*, frequently pray to God as his Father? Was not Christ also *as Son* anointed by God the Father? But does not this circumstance import, that *as Son* he is *subordinate to, and dependent on the Father?* Was "that holy *thing*," called the *Son* of God, which was born of the virgin Mary, the *very God*, and equal to the Father? Was God, the supreme Jehovah, a *thing* that was *born?* Or

was this God ever *begotten?* or *crucified*, or *carried up*, or *sent into* the world! but all these things are true of the *Son* of God. Did not Christ, *as Son*, expressly say, that he knew not when that day (probably the day of judgment) would take place? Did he not expressly say, "My Father is greater than I" *the Son?* It is true, indeed, that because Christ claimed the title of Son of God, the Jews accused him of blasphemy, and of making himself God. But he replied, and apparently with the view to *disclaim* all pretence to be the Supreme God, "Is it not written in your law, I said ye are Gods? If he (the Father) called them (men) Gods, unto whom the word of God come; say ye of him (myself) whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blaspkemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?" If God the Father called *men Gods*, would the Jews reasonably infer that Christ pretended to be the *Supreme God*, because he said he was the *Son* of the Supreme God! Must not this have been an inference without a premise, which in the least degree could justify it? And did not Christ very plainly *tell them so?*

Now, sir, let me ask, do you, *can* you believe, in the view of these considerations, that the *title*, *Son* of God, is expressive of the divinity—even the "*Godhead*" of Christ? If so, what are you not capable of believing? But if you do not believe this, what becomes of your *Trinitarianism?* In the estimation of Dr. Hopkins,—of the "most correct Theologians"—of the General Association, and the "church of Christ generally, from the beginning of the fourth century to this time," I see not but you must be "anti-trinitarian" and ranked with "*Arians and Socinians*," and with *all those who deny the divinity of Jesus Christ*;" and that they must denounce you as believing that "divinity is *no part* of his character, and that he is *not* God." Will you deny, that you have incurred all this censure from this host of Trinitarians? *I presume you will not;* how much soever you may desire and attempt to evade it.

I am not insensible there are some, "especially of late," who deny this doctrine in as peremtory a manner, as Trinitarians have heretofore asserted it. Among this number, if you have not greatly deceived me, you rank yourself, and acknowledge for your leader, the

REV. ETHAN SMITH,

whose belief is, that "the Sonship of Christ clearly originates in his being the *begotten* of God; and this his being begotten is to be "applied to the time and manner of Christ's coming in the flesh, or his miraculous conception;—to his induction into his office, as the prophet, and especially the high priest of his people;—and to his resurrection from the dead, and exaltation to glory." (Smith's view of the Trinity, pp. 24, 25.) In page 26 the same

writer observes, "God miraculously occasioned the conception of the humanity of Christ. He thus fulfilled the prediction in the second Psalm, And hence Christ is the Son of God. This is the primary, the original ground of Christ's Sonship, as is fully decided by the angel Gabriel in his interview with Mary."—The following passage occurs in page 30. "What *occasion* or *right* has man to enquire for any reason anterior to the one so naturally assigned here by the angel as the *origin* of the Sonship of Christ? Does not the heavenly Agent assign the *primary* and *true* ground of his filiation" viz. Psalm ii. 7. "The Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;" in other words, the "miraculous conception," or incarnation of Christ, which took place in the reign of Cesar Augustus. In the same page the writer observes, "One might think that if God would send an angel from heaven to give express information of the origin of Christ's filiation, it might be sufficient, that men might confide in a point so decided; and that he would not *dare* to call on others to believe in an *anterior* ground of Christ's filiation. Who has been God's councellor or taught him wisdom?"—Whom, sir, does this writer here accuse of arroganee, presumption, and *daring impiety*, if not Trinitarians, generally? who have believed and maintained, that "Jesus Christ is the *eternal Son* of God; that his *Sonship* is essential to him, as the *second person* in the Trinity, and that *in this sense*, he is *the only begotten Son of the Father*, antecedent to his incarnation, and independent on it, even from eternity" (Hopkins System, vol. 1, p. 368.) Is it indeed true that *Trinitarians* generally, will "*not confide* in a point so decided?"—*decided by the angel Gabriel!* Is it indeed true that *they* undertake to be "*God's councellors*," and "*to teach him wisdom!*" Have *they* the temerity to *say* that Jesus Christ is called the Son of God, the Son of the Father with a special reference to his *divine nature*, and to denote his *Godhead*," when Mr. Smith *affirms* that he was God's *Son* because God *begat his humanity*," (p. 38) when *he* affirms, that "it seems as though the *designation* of Christ to the work of High Priest is figuratively represented as God's *begetting him*," and that "the noted prediction of the generation of Christ, on which his filiation rests, is in some figurative sense, fulfilled by his *resurrection from the dead*, and *induction to his inheritance!*"

According to Trinitarians generally, "Jesus Christ is the *eternal* Son of God; his *Sonship* is essential to him as the *second person* in the Trinity; *in this sense* he is *the only begotten Son of the Father*, antecedent to his incarnation, and independent on it, even from eternity." But according to Mr. Smith, the very *reverse* of this is true; and he evidently insinuates, that whoever *dares* to question the truth of *his theory*, opposes the truth as declared by the angel Gabriel, and presumes to

counsel God, and teach him wisdom! If the sentiments of Trinitarians are correct on this subject, then Mr. Smith "speaks not only *without Scripture*, but *contrary to it*." But if Mr. Smith's sentiments are correct, then the "God," *yes*, the very "*Godhead*" of *Trinitarians*, is "the *humanity* of Christ!" In whose theory, sir, is the truth to be found? In the Trinitarian theory, or that of Mr. Smith? Although *you* will probably say, in the *latter*, *I* am very far from being prepared to say, that the truth is to be found in *either*. But who shall decide, when great men and "Doctors thus widely disagree?"

By the above remarks I would not be understood as insinuating that Mr. Smith is in *no sense* a Trinitarian, or an advocate for the divinity of Christ. He indeed *professes* to be a Trinitarian and a believer in the doctrine which teaches, that Jesus Christ is a being of "infinite Divinity." Yet he asks (p. 59) "Is it not a *self-evident fact* that the love and grace of God are infinitely *more* exhibited, in sending a Saviour of infinite divinity, than in sending a derived, dependent Saviour?"—But is it a *self evident fact*, I would ask, that God either *did*, or *can send* a Saviour of *infinite divinity!* I see not how this is practicable, unless God can *send himself!* But if it be a self-evident fact that God did send a Saviour of *infinite* divinity, I see not but this same *infinite* divinity must have been (however paradoxical) an *inferior* and *obedient* divinity!

In page 75 Mr. Smith speaks of Christ as God's "angel, or messenger," and of "the *Lord*, or *Jehovah*, the person of the Father," as existing "beside this angel;" and "yet," he observes, "this angel was the *very God*." His conclusion is, "that God and Christ were, *in some mysterious sense*, two, yet *essentially one*."—Here, sir, I would ask, how can an angel, or messenger, sent by God, be "the *very God*," *whose angel he is!* or what is this "mysterious sense" in which "God and Christ" are "two" and yet "essentially one!" I know not how these things can be, or how to understand or believe them.

In page 86, our author quotes Heb. i. 8. "Unto the Son he (God) saith, thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." In the next page he asks, "does it not most positively establish Christ's *distinct personality* in the Godhead, and yet his being *one with God*, and the *very God!*"—In answer to this question I would say, that the text positively establishes the truth of the sentiment, that Christ is a distinct person, or being, from the One God, his Father, seems too obvious to admit of doubt; but that it proves Christ to be *very God*, I do not see. Has the *very God a God above him!* The person addressed in the eighth verse, who is Christ, is thus represented in the ninth verse, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even *thy* God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness, above thy fellows." If Christ be *very God*, *who* is the *God of*

Christ? If Christ be very God, who was that God who *anointed* him? If Christ be very God, who are the *fellows* of this very God?

In page 89, the following passage occurs. "To say, that God *might*, in order to confer on his Son an infinite honor, *determine*, that an atonement and righteousness, which a finite Son could effect, should be *declared* and *viewed* as of *infinite avail*, appears preposterous."—In the view of this quotation, I would ask, in what way was an atonement for sin effected? Was it not effected principally, at least, by the *sufferings and death of Christ?* But did the *very God*, the infinite Jehovah—that God who is ever blessed, and with whom is no variation or shadow of change, *suffer and die* to make atonement for sin? Is not the supposition as *impious* as it is "preposterous?" Will you say it was the *man* Christ Jesus, or Christ Jesus in his *humanity*, or as a *creature*, who suffered and died to make atonement? But is not the supposition that *humanity*, or a *creature* who had existed but little more than thirty years, would make an atonement of *infinite avail*, in the highest degree *preposterous!* But will the author of the above quotation say, or will you say, that Christ suffered and died, in his *complex character*, considered as *very God*, and as *very man!* Should you say this, must you not admit that the *very God* as well as the very man, was a *sufferer* and underwent an *ignominious and painful death?* Mr. Smith does indeed seem to admit and even to say this, in p. 94,95. "The sufferings of *Christ* must have been the sufferings of *God* in a *sense* that was either *real*, or *constituted*"—"There is no other possible sense in which the sufferings of the Mediator, can be of *infinite* avail, as being the sufferings of God. But Christ's sufferings are esteemed the sufferings of God."—To this I reply—If the gentleman means to say that the sufferings of Christ were *really* and *truly* the sufferings of God, or of the Supreme Deity, I must consider the assertion as shockingly irreverent. But if by the sufferings of God in a *constituted* sense, he means that God *seemingly* suffered, but *not really*, I cannot but consider his representation as *grossly deceptive*, and as treating a most sacred and solemn subject, in a most *trifling and unjustifiable manner*. If the sufferings of the Mediator were the sufferings of God, to *what* God, I desire to know, did this Mediator God offer himself, when he "gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice *to God!*" Did he make himself an offering and a sacrifice *to himself!* Besides, if he made an infinite atonement for the sins of mankind *by suffering*—if his suffering were infinite, or equal to the demerit of all the sins of mankind, (which surely cannot be more than infinite,) and if he suffered expressly on *their account*, or in *their behalf*, what reason can be assigned, that all mankind will not be saved from the second death? If infinite sufferings have been order-

ed *for* the supposed infinite demerit of the sins of men, can it be reasonable to suppose, notwithstanding this, that these same men, or *any of them* should also endure for the same sins, infinite sufferings?

In page 119, our author observes—"To represent Christ as a *being* distinct from the Father; and to allow, that he is at the same time called *God;* is to own *two Gods.*"—This will readily be admitted. It will not be owned, however, that there are two *Supreme* Gods. Because I admit that Christ is a *distinct being* from the Father, and yet allow that he is *called God*, does it necessarily follow, that I own *two Gods* who are *self-existent and Supreme!* This, if I understand him, Mr. Smith asserts. But does not this gentleman admit that *angels* and *magistrates* are *called Gods*, and by God himself? does he not admit, also, that they are *distinct beings* from that God who thus styles them? According to his own reasoning then, so far as I can see, *he* admits that there are *many Supreme Gods!*

"Relative to Christ's humanity," this writer observes, p. 121, 122, "he is *made* head over all things to the church; and God the Father hath highly *exalted* him, and *given* him a name, that is above every name." In p. 123, he observes—"When he (Christ) spoke, in the days of his humiliation, of his dependence on God, he spoke in relation to his human nature."—Whether, sir, you acknowledge these observations as correct, I cannot positively say; but from what I have heard you observe of Mr. Smith's theory, I must suppose that you agree with him in sentiment on this subject. But if Christ relative to his *humanity*, is head over all things to the church, and if, as to *human nature*, or as *a creature*, he possesses a name which is *above every name*, *where* shall we find any exaltation, or dignity, or honor, of an *higher description* ascribed to him, as expressive of *his Divinity?* Do the scriptures ever represent him as possessing authority higher than that which is implied in his being "*head over all things?*" Or is any name ascribed to him which imports higher dignity or glory than is implied, in a "name which is *above every name!*" But these things belong to Christ, if we are to believe Mr. Smith, "relative to his *humanity.*" If, sir, you believe this hypothesis, I see not but you must believe, that the same "Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, and who thought it not robbery to be *equal* with God," and at "whose name every knee is to bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," is no more than *humanity* or a *creature*; for *this same Christ Jesus* is the very person or being, whom God *exalted* and to whom he *gave* a name which is above every name. And this same Christ Jesus, whom God *made* to be head over all things, he "*set* at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is

named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath *put* all things under his feet." See Phil. ii. 5—10, and Eph. i. 20—22.

In p. 126, Mr. Smith observes, that "Paul speaking of Christ, who will appear in judgment, the king of kings, adds, "Who *only* hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen. 1 Tim. vi. 16. On this text he observes, "If Christ *only* hath immortality; then surely he is *God*, the only living God; or else there is *no* God of immortality."—Here I would ask—if the *person* of *Christ only* hath immortality; *how* can the person of the Father *possess immortality!* Or if the person of Christ *only* be immortal, can the person of the Father *also* be immortal! This, it should seem, cannot be the case unless there are *two immortals!* But perhaps you will say the writer meant to convey the idea, that the *one God*, as existing in three persons, *only* hath immortality. Why then did he not *say* that this was his meaning? He says that which seems very clearly to imply, that but *one of these persons* hath immortality, to the *exclusion of the others.* Had he said that the one God, even the *Father*, hath immortality, I should understand his meaning, and believe that he expressed the sentiments of the inspired Paul; for the Apostle, I am persuaded, applied the above quoted text, *exclusively*, to God, even the Father of Christ. It is thus applied by *Pool's continators*, by *Hammond*, and by the *author of the Illustration of the Scriptures*, and I will venture to presume, that it is thus applied by *Commentators generally;* nor can I easily conceive, that any unprejudiced and discerning mind can examine the text without being satisfactorily convinced that it applies *exclusively to the Father.*

To prove the humanity of Christ, or that he possessed a created soul, which began to exist at his incarnation, Mr. Smith quotes Heb. ii. 9. "But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the sufferings of death, crowned with glory and honor." Because Jesus was *made a little lower than the angels*, this writer infers the *manhood* of Christ. But must he not, to be consistent, infer that Christ is *divine*, even the *Supreme Divinity*, from the consideration that the author of the epistle to the Hebrews i. 4. speaks of Christ as "being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they?" Christ was as truly *made better* than angels, as he was *made lower* than angels. But if *because* he was made *lower* than angels, he must be *man*, does it not follow that, as he was made *better* than angels, he must be *God!* Must not Mr. Smith admit then, that Christ, *as God*, was *made God!* How *this gentleman* can *reconcile* these representations, according to his theory, I know not.

But that they are perfectly reconcilable I am fully satisfied.—Nor do I think that the *author* of the epistle to the Hebrews, has failed clearly to *reconcile* them. Christ was made "a little lower than angels" in that *he was liable* to "*the sufferings of death*" and actually *suffered death*, to which sufferings *angels are not liable.* But this same Christ was "made much better than the angels" in that God "appointed him *heir of all things;*" in that he "*made the worlds by him;*" in that *he sat down* on the right hand of the Majesty on high; and in that, "*he obtained* a more excellent inheritance *than they;* for, to which of the angels said he (God) at any time, sit on my right hand?"

Mr. Smith, after having endeavored to ascertain that there are *two* in the Godhead, of equal Divinity, *God* and *Christ*, represented as *two*, yet essentially *one*," observes—"If these are *two*, in the sense explained; no difficulty is increased, by supposing there are *three* in the Godhead." p. 156. But if the difficulty would not be increased by *supposing* there are *three* in the Godhead, would the difficulty, I would ask, be increased by *supposing* that *any number greater than three*, exists in the Godhead? Why is not the *latter* supposition admissible as the *former?* Mr. Smith cannot consistently say that the number is *limited to three* in the Bible; for he admits (p. 158) that in "the Scriptures, the *number three* is *not* noted." In the same page, however, he observes, "the Bible throughout, does teach, that there is something in the mode of the divine existence, which lays the foundation for the *one God* to speak of *himself*, as *I, thou* and *he.*" This circumstance he considers, as do Trinitarian writers generally, as furnishing a strong argument in support of the doctrine, that God exists in three persons.—But should this agreement be admitted as proof of the doctrine, will it not equally prove a *trinity in man*, or that man exists in *three persons!* The Psalmist thus speaks of *himself*, "Why art *thou* cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquietted in me? Hope thou in God; for *I* shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance, O my God, *my soul* is cast down within me." Here David speaks of himself in the three persons, *I* and *thou*, and *he*, for the term *soul* is as truly the *third* person, as the personal pronoun *he.* This, every grammarian will admit. But should you say that the Psalmist does not *expressly* speak of himself by using the personal pronoun *he*, and therefore the argument is inconclusive, yet you will not question, I presume, that the Apostle Paul in speaking of *himself* makes use of *that* pronoun. His words are "I knew a man in Christ—how *he* was caught up into paradise." By *he*, as well as *I*, the Apostle evidently intends himself; but could he not with the utmost propriety have spoken of himself as *thou* in the second person, as did David? Since then "there is something in the mode" of

man's existence, "which lays the foundation" for him "to speak of himself," as *I*, *thou*, and *he*, is there not, from this consideration, the *same reason* to conclude that man exists in a Trinity of persons, as that the One God thus exists? If not, I wish to see some satisfactory reason assigned for it.

In p. 59, our author observes, "in proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, that the word Aleim. or Elohim, in Hebrew, translated God, is in the plural."—As this circumstance, and several others in following pages appear to me to be so little to his purpose—so little to be relied on as proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, I shall pass them without particular notice.

In p. 180, Mr. Smith observes, that "sins against the *Father* and the *Son*, *may* be pardoned." "But whosoever speaks against the *Holy Ghost*, it shall never be forgiven him." He then asks, "Does not this strongly indicate, that the Holy Ghost has personal existence? Can this be only the *operations* of the Father *personified?* Would it be so much more dangerous to speak a word against merely a person in figure, than to be guilty of all manner of blasphemies against *God* and against *Christ?*" In view of this question I would ask the author, whether in *his* estimation it is more dangerous to speak against the *real* person of the *Holy Ghost*, "than to be guilty of all manner of blasphemies" against the persons of the *Father* and *Son?* If not, why should that sin be unpardonable? If it do not admit of forgiveness, because it is a *greater sin*, than blasphemy against the Father and the Son; but because God in a *sovereign manner* has determined that it shall not be forgiven, I see not but it may as well be unpardonable, if committed against a *person* "*in a figure*" as against a *real person.*—But Mr. Smith can with no consistency say, that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, *is* a greater sin than blasphemy against either the Father or the Son, and for this plain reason, that *each* of these persons is in his estimation the *same* in substance, and *equal* to the others in power and glory. But why may we not suppose that blasphemy against the *Holy Ghost* is a *greater sin* than blasphemy against either the *Father* or the *Son?* May we not consider the *Holy Ghost* as the *Father manifested*, or *exhibited to view* by the *operations of his Spirit*, or by *his own operations*, in producing effects of *beneficence or mercy?* If so, is it not reasonable to admit, that to blaspheme against God, as *thus manifested or exhibited*, is *more sinful* than to blaspheme against him, *independent of this circumstance?* No view of the subject appears to me so consistent and correct, as this.

In p. 192, the following passage occurs—"The Father is at the head of the economy of grace. In this economy the Father holds in his hands the honors of the Godhead, or of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost."—I will only say of this passage, that if it is consistent with the doctrine which advocates

the supremacy and independence of the Son and Spirit, as distinct persons, I cannot see its consistency.

Speaking of the three persons in the Godhead our author observes, p. 193, "that each one in reality does what is done by either."—If this be true, must it not be admitted, that Christ *the Son* sanctified and sent himself into the world; that the *person* of the *Father* prayed to the Father; performed the work of mediation *between himself* and sinful men, that the *person of Christ gave himself* to be head over all things to the church! If each person in the Trinity does in *reality* what is done by either, I see not but all these and many other things equally strange and difficult to believe, must be admitted as unquestionable realities! But do you find, sir, no difficulty in thus admitting them?

These notices of Mr. Smith's "View of the Trinity," are not designed as a particular and full answer to his book; but to offer such objections to it, as to me appear pertinent, weighty and unanswerable. Although I consider the publication as the result of diligent research; as indicative of a pious mind; as exhibiting less asperity and censoriousness than the writings of Trinitarians generally on the same subject; yet it has failed to convince me, that his view of the Trinity is a doctrine of the bible. Nor do I think his theory incapable of a fair and reasonable, if not of an undoubted refutation. To the "testimonies of the primitive fathers in favor of the doctrine of the Trinity in unity in the Godhead; and of the proper divinity of Jesus Christ," very little weight or importance is, I am persuaded, to be attached. Although I do not profess to be intimately conversant with the writings of these same fathers, yet I have paid so much attention to them, as to be well satisfied that Mr. *Smith's view* of the Trinity was *not their's*. So far from advocating this gentleman's theory, "they generally spoke of the Son as having had a glorious nature, pre-existent to his incarnation, and as having been *derived* from the Father." The earliest fathers, however, whose writings have reached our time, appear to have but very little considered and discussed the doctrine of the Trinity. It must also be admitted, that they were neither very acute or consistent reasoners on this, or on any other subject.—I will only add, sir, that if you place dependence on these same fathers as a support of the doctrine of a Triune God, you will find them "a broken reed *at best*, perhaps a *spear*."

As in the course of this letter I have introduced to your notice the late Dr. S. Hopkins, and as I suppose in the character of an *opponent*, at least in part, to your theory, I will now, that you may not consider me as "driving any thing by partiality, exhibit him to your view as a *fellow helper*"—

DOCTOR HOPKINS AGAIN,

In page 348, says, "the personality of Jesus Christ, is in his divine nature, and not in the human. Jesus Christ existed a distinct divine person from eternity, the second person in the adorable Trinity. Had the second person in the Trinity taken a human person into union with himself, and were this possible, Jesus Christ, God and man, would be *two persons*, not one."—But if the *personality* of *Christ* is *exclusively* in his *divine nature*, his *human nature*, it should seem, cannot be a *constituent part* of his *personality*, or of *his person*. How then is "this person both God and man?" Besides, if the human nature of Christ, or his "true body and reasonable soul" did not constitute personality, or a person, in what does personality consist? If a "true and *real man*" is *not a person*, it must, I should think, be very difficult to determine who or what a person is. If Jesus Christ in his divine nature be truly a person; and if a proper man be also a person, then, the Doctor observes, had Jesus Christ united himself to this man or person, he would be *two persons*, although I should not say as this writer does, that *one person* would become *two*, yet I can see no impropriety in admitting, that *two persons*, are *really two persons*, their union notwithstanding. Although a man is so united to a woman as to become *one*, yet does the person of the man become *two persons?* Does not the doctor's theory of the union of the second person of the Trinity with a proper man, rest on the supposition that a proper man is not a proper person? and yet this theory must be admitted as a *fundamental doctrine of the Bible?*

I am aware that this respectable writer allows, that the second person in the Trinity "assumed," although not a *human person*, yet "*human nature*, into a personal union with himself." But how, I would ask, can human nature constitute a part of Christ's person, if his "personality" is exclusively in his divine nature? If these things are intelligible, most devoutly do I desire to understand them—if true, to believe them.

But notwithstanding, according to the theory I am now examining, Jesus Christ possesses "two distinct natures in one person forever;" yet the Doctor observes (p. 347,) that "what may be affirmed of either nature, divine and human, is true, and may be affirmed, of this person, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer." Here you will bear it in mind, "that the personality of Jesus Christ, is in his divine nature, and not in the human."—What then, I would ask, will you affirm of the human nature of Christ? Will you not affirm of this human nature that it began to exist?—that it is infinitely inferior to the person of the Supreme Deity?—that it suffered, died, was raised from the dead and exalted to a state of glory? But will you affirm

all these things of the *person* of Christ, whose *personality*, is to be found *exclusively* in his *divine nature*?

In page 362, the Doctor observes, "the second person in the Trinity will not be less, but more honored and glorious forever, than if he were not man, as well as God."—If you, sir, can admit this mysterious paradox as true, yet do you find *no difficulty* in allowing, that Jesus Christ will be "more honored and glorious forever," on account of his incarnation, than he otherwise would be? was he not, in your estimation the Supreme Deity before this event took place, and that he was so perfect and glorious a person, as to be *incapable of receiving any additional perfection and glory?* How then—can the circumstance of his incarnation make him *more glorious* and *more worthy of honor*, than if he had never become incarnate? Besides the seeming absurdity of this sentiment, does it not represent Christ as a person *more* to be honored, and *more* glorious forever than the *person of the Father?* I do not see, sir, how you can avoid this conclusion. Nor do I see that you can *consistently* wish to avoid it; for if the person Jesus Christ, previously to his incarnation was *equal* in power and glory to the person of the Father, I see not, on the Trinitarian hypothesis, but his incarnation must have made him *greatly superior to his Father!* How indeed, can this conclusion be avoided, if, as Dr. Hopkins suggests, (p. 350,) we may safely conclude that the human nature of Jesus Christ, is greater in capacity, in knowledge and holiness, and has, and will have without end, more or a greater degree of existence, worth and happiness, not only than any mere creature, but more and greater than the whole redeemed church, and even all the elect angels, were the latter summed up together. The former, when put into the balance, may exceed it, to a degree beyond all our present conceptions."—If, sir, the second person in the Trinity, is equal to the person of the Father in power and glory, independent of his union to a creature so inconceivably great, will you say that in consequence of this union by which he becomes *one person* with that creature, he is not an *inconceivably* greater person than the person of the Father! Should you reject this inference as shocking and absurd, I pray you seriously to examine its premises, and then say, if you consistently can, that the inference is either unnatural or illegitimate.

Having thus briefly reviewed the sentiments of Dr. Hopkins in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity, and particularly in relation to Jesus Christ, which I cannot but think, when weighed in even balances, will be "found wanting," permit me now to introduce to your notice another eminent Trinitarian writer,

DOCTOR EMMONS.

This celebrated, and in many respects excellent writer, in

his sermon on the Trinity, founds the doctrine of three equal persons in One God, or One God as existing in three persons, on. Eph. ii. 18. "For through him (Christ) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father"—That the Doctor has put a very wrong construction on this text, I will not peremtorily say; but that this is probable, there is much reason to believe. The following I would respectfully offer as a natural and just exposition of the passage—"Though Christ—by his ministry—through what he did and suffered to convert sinners unto God, we, both Jews and Gentiles, who have been renewed in the Spirit of our minds by the transforming influence of the Spirit of God, have aecess, with aeceptanee, to him, as the Father of all, with whom is no respect of persons. And being in a state of favor and friendship with God; we have without differenee or distinction, the same spiritual gifts, consolations and blessings bestowed upon us."—But whether this be a just and eorreet exposition of the text, the sermon which this author has composed from it, has not, I am persuaded, that intimate connexion with it, which is to be found between his texts and sermons generally. Nor will many passages in his sermon, it is believed, very easily command the belief of the discerning reader, as containing either correctness or consistency of sentiment.

In page 9, the author observes—"It is very remarkable that neither Christ, nor the Apostles ever spake of the sacred Trinity as a new, but only as an old doctrine, which had been taught and believed, under all the previous dispensations of the gospel."—If by this the Doctor means to be understood as saying that they *never* "spake of the sacred Trinity," as *he* speaks of it, or even in any other sense implying the existence of three equal persons in one God, he would probably have spoken the truth. Or had he said, that this doctrine had *neither* "*been taught, nor believed*, under all the previous dispensations of the Gospel," the declaration might be entitled to some evidenee. What evidence, I would ask, do we find in either the preaching of Christ or his Apostles, that this doctrine had been believed under any former dispensation, or under the then existing dispensat on? The Apostles of our Lord appear to have had no other belief respecting Christ, till after his resurreetion, than that he was an extraordinary personage, whom God had sent into their nation as an instructor, and as their deliverer from the Roman yoke. But immediately after his crucifixion, they seemed almost, or quite to have abandoned their "trust that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." Besides, if the Apostles had been in the habit of speaking of the Trinity, as an old doctrine and generally believed, is it not very extraordinary, that "certain" of their "disciples" should *say* on being asked, and even after their baptism, whether they had "received the Holy Ghost since they had believed," "We

have *not so much as heard* whether *there be any Holy Ghost!*" These things considered, the Doctor's assertion will not be esteemed, I presume, by his attentive readers, as possessing the force of either proof or argument; nor is it easy to conceive that he has supported that assertion by any argument in his discourse, which can be convictive or satisfactory to an unbiassed and attentive mind.

In page 10, this writer observes, "if it were ever proper for guilty creatures in this world, to present their prayers and praises to the Father through the Son, and by the Spirit, it was proper before the law, under the law, and under the Gospel. Hence we justly conclude, that we ought to address and worship the one true God, as existing in three persons." This specimen of the Doctor's reasoning, does not, I am constrained to say, exhibit to my mind that evidence of his discriminating faculties and logical acumen, which I had expected from a man of his celebrity as a reasoner. If prayers and praises ought to have been offered *to* the Father *through* the Son, before, and under the law, and *by* the Spirit, in the *sense of this writer*, is it not surprising that we should find *neither precept nor example* for it in any part of the Old Testament scriptures! Besides, does it very clearly follow, that "guilty creatures either under the law or gospel, ought to address and worship the one true God, as existing in three persons" from the consideration that "prayers and praises are to be presented *to* the Father, *through* the Son, and *by* the Spirit?" is not the Father according to Dr. Emmons' theory one, and but one of the persons of the sacred three? If then we are to pray to the *person* of the Father through the Son and by the Spirit, does it not clearly follow, that we "ought" *not* "to address and worship the one true God, as existing in three persons?" Because the Son is the *medium* of access to the Father, and because in this access we should be under the *guidance* and *sanctifying operation of his spirit*, how do these circumstances make it appear, that we are to worship the Son and Spirit as distinct persons in one God? If this be either conclusive, or possible, or even *specious reasoning*, I have not the discernment, I freely confess, to discover it. Nor does the Doctor's view of this subject, it should seem, however unwilling he may be to acknowledge it, greatly differ from mine; for p. 23, he says, "that we ought to regard and acknowledge the FATHER, as the head of the sacred Trinity, and the primary object of religious homage." He adds, "we often read of Christ's praying to the Father, but never read of the Father's praying unto Christ."

If our author does not in this passage expressly and in strong terms *deny* the *equality* of the *Son* and *Spirit* with the Father, it is difficult to conceive by what words the denial could be made. Since the "Father is the *head* of the Trinity, and the

primary object of religious homage, he must surely be the *first* in *dignity*—the *original, chief, principal object* of religious homage; nor is it possible that more than *one* such object of homage should exist. And that the Father is this sole object of religious homage, is evident, the Doctor observes, from "the examples of Christ, of the Apostles, and of the heavenly hosts." The examples to which he refers are, "Christ's praying unto the Father—the Apostle's offering up their devout and fervent prayers to the God and *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ," and "the heavenly hosts paying divine homage more immediately and directly to the Father." Now as Christ or the second person in the Trinity, the Apostles and the heavenly hosts "acknowledge the Father as the primary or supreme object of adoration," I see not, as the Doctor observes, but "Christians are to address their prayers and praises to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the primary" or supreme "object of divine homage and adoration." But with the Doctor, I cannot see the consistency of admitting that the person of the Father is the head of the Trinity, and the primary object of religious homage, and yet that "all the three persons in the Godhead are equal in every divine perfection!" Nor is it less difficult for me to conceive, that the three persons should be thus equal, and yet that one of the persons should pray to the other, as his God and Father! *How can these things be?*

In p. 13, 14, the following things are notable. "David clearly understood the doctrine of the Trinity, and frequently refers to each person, in the book of Psalms. He says to God, "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me, &c." "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, &c."—"The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord said unto me, thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "These predictions respected each person in the Trinity."—But if these predictions relate to the doctrine of the Trinity, to what *kind* of Trinity, I would ask, do they relate? If to a Trinity of persons in one God, and "each equal to the others in power and glory," is it not unaccountably strange, that *one* of these persons should *command* or *direct another*, to sit at his right hand, and to make supplication, and that *this one person*, should *subdue* for the *other* his enemies; *beget him*, and *give him* an inheritance! And because David prayed to God to be admitted into his favor—to restore to him the consolations of his spirit, or his own merciful consolations, does it follow that the Spirit of God is a distinct person from God himself? or because he could not, "go from God's Spirit" or "presence" is it to be inferred that his Spirit or presence is a distinct person.

Such reasoning as this, is, I confess, very far from being conclusive, or satisfactory to my mind. Yet it is so conclusive and satisfactory in the estimation of Dr. Emmons, as to convince him, p. 14, that "all the prophets who foretold the coming of Christ, understood the doctrine of the Trinity, and the different parts, which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, were to act in carrying into execution the gracious scheme of redemption!"

In p. 15, the Doctor observes, "The apostle Paul begins and ends all his Epistles, in the very spirit and language of the Trinity." Strange assertion! An assertion directly the *reverse* of this, might be made; I will not *say* strictly conformable to *truth*, but I venture to *intimate* that it really would be so. That you, sir, may decide for yourself on this subject, permit me to request you to examine both the beginning and the end of all Paul's epistles. In proof of his assertion, the Doctor thinks it sufficient "to mention one instance, in the close of his second epistle to the Corinthians." This instance is in the following words, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." As this is the *only* instance which the Doctor *could* produce exhibiting even the *semblance* of evidence in proof of his positive and unqualified assertion, he had a very good reason for declining to produce a *plurality*. But what evidence, sir, does the Doctor's solitary "instance" furnish in support of the doctrine of "three persons in the Godhead, equal in every divine perfection?" Can any thing more be intended by the apostle's benevolent wish or benediction than this—"May the favor of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, be with you; and may you all be partakers of, and enjoy in common, the gifts and consolations of *his* Spirit, or which he imparts from his *own fulness?*"—But as the "apostle ends *all* his epistles in the very language and spirit of the Trinity," perhaps you may think that other instances would be more to the Doctor's purpose than the solitary one which he quoted. I will, to save you the trouble of turning to them, quote several more. "*To* God only wise, be glory *through* Jesus Christ, forever, Amen." "*My love* be with you all in Christ Jesus, Amen." "Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, Amen." "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, Amen." "The salutation by the hand of *me Paul*. Remember *my bonds* Grace be with *you*, Amen." "Grace be with *thee*, Amen." "*All* that are with *me* salute *thee*. Greet *them* all that *love us* in *the faith*. Grace be with you all, Amen." Thus *end* most of the epistles of Paul. And here we find, "the very spirit and language of the Trinity!" And much in the same manner, we find this same "spirit," at the *beginning* of Paul's epistles—in the *middle*, and

throughout. And here we find evidence to convince Doctor Emmons that three persons, equal in power and glory exist in, or constitute one God!

In p. 16, 17, 18, we find these observations;—"The Father is by nature God, and by office, the Creator, Lawgiver, Governor and Judge of the world."—And this is his "exclusive office." "The Son is by nature God, and by office, the Redeemer, Mediator, or Saviour of the world. In this office, he has acted, and still acts, in subordination to the Father."—"The Holy Ghost is by nature God, and by office, the Sanctifier and Comforter of the heirs of salvation. In this office, he acts in subordination to the Son, as well as to the Father."—"We are indebted to the Father for bringing us into existence, and sending his Son to die for us. We are indebted to the Son for his condescension and grace, in redeeming us to God by his blood. And we are indebted to the Holy Ghost for all he has done to form us vessels of mercy."—I do not expect, sir, that I shall be able to do ample justice to this complicated and mysterous passage, which appears to me to be highly exceptionable, and equally inconsistent with the doctrine of the Trinity. If the Father is by nature God, if the Son is by nature God, and if the Holy Ghost is by nature God, must not each be either completety God, or partially God? If *completely* God, then I see not but there must neeessarily be *three supreme and independent Gods!* But if each is but *partially* God, then it seems unavoidably to follow, either that there is *no supreme and independent God*, or that *three partial or defective Gods*, by virture of a mysterious union, constitute *one perfect God;* or that this perfect God consists of three *official Gods!*—I do not make these representations with a captious disposition, or to involve the doctrine of the Trinity in greater darkness and mystery, than it really is involved by the most lucid representation which is made of it; but to shew that the doctrine leads either to one or other of the above conclusions, repulsive and shocking as it may appear.

I have further to say, that if "The Father is by office *exclusively*" the Creator, Lawgiver, Governor and Judge of the world, I see not with what propriety Trinitarians ascribe all these characters to the person of Christ.—If the Son by office, "acts in subordination to the Father," I see not but the *second person* in the Trinity acts a *subordinate part*, and is therefore *inferior* to the *Father;* and if the Holy Ghost by office acts in subordination to the Son, as well as to the Father, I do not see but the *third person* in the Trinity acts this *subordinate part*, and is therefore *inferior* as well to the Son as to the Father. Besides, if we are exclusively indebted to the Father for bringing us into existence, how can we be indebted to the Son for our existence, or with what truth or propriety can it be said, that "all things were made *by* and for him?" If we are "in-

debted to the *Son* for his condescension and grace in redeeming us to God by his blood," then we are not indebted to *God*, it should seem, for any condescension and grace on his part for our redemption. But if *Christ* by *nature*, though not by office, is *God*, why are we not indebted to God for the price paid for our redemption? To say that *God* redeemed us *unto God*, or *unto himself* by his blood; or that God suffered and died, in behalf of sinful men, seems, indeed, highly improper and inconsistent. But is it not equally improper and inconsistent to say that a person who is "the Supreme Deity," or that a person who is "equal to him in every divine perfection," "redeemed us to God by becoming *obedient* unto *death*, even the death of the cross!"

If "we are indebted to the Holy Ghost, for all that he has done to form us vessels of mercy," and if this third person in the Trinity "acts in subordination to the Son, as well as to the Father, must we not be indebted to an *inferior agent* for all that mercy which prepares us for, and which includes eternal life! But if the *Holy Ghost* is by "office" the "*Sanctifier*," and "*Comforter*;" and if "the Father, never works *officially* with the Holy Ghost," how are we to account for it, that christians "are *sanctified by God the Father*," and that it is *he* "who *comforteth* us in *all* our tribulations!"

In p. 18, 19, the following paradoxical passages occur—"The inspired writers represent true believers as holding communion sometimes with the Father, sometimes with the Son, and sometimes with the Holy Ghost."—"Christ prayed, that all his followers might enjoy the same union and communion with him, which he enjoyed with the Father."—"When christians hold communion with God, they hold communion with each person in the Godhead distinctly. Their communion with the Father is not their communion with the Son, and their communion with the Son, is not their communion with the Father, and their communion with the Spirit, is not their communion with either Father or Son."—Yet each of these persons "is by nature God"—each, "equal in every divine perfection" and each the true God! Why then, is not communion with either, communion with them all conjointly? If to hold communion with the one God is holding communion with each person in the Godhead *distinctly*, and if each person is by nature God and possesses the whole nature and all the perfections of God, I see not but holding communion with either person *distinctly*, is to hold communion with all the persons *conjointly!* Besides, if Christ's "followers enjoy the same union and communion with him, which he enjoyed with his Father," and if the union and communion between Christ and his Father were such as to constitute them *one being*, does it not follow that the union and communion between Christ and his followers, constitutes *them*

one being with *himself*, with the *Father* and the *Holy Spirit!* Must it not also be admitted, that the followers of Christ in holding communion with *each other*, do, by *that act* hold communion with *all the persons of the Trinity!* Thus strange, mysterious and seemingly absurd is the doctrine of a Trinity! Three equally divine persons, and yet "but one divine Being!" "But this," says the Doctor, "is the mystery of the doctrine, which it is neither possible, nor necessary for us to understand" p. 21. That three divine persons, equal in power and glory, should be but one divine being; or that one divine being should be three equally divine persons; or that each of these divine persons should be "the Supreme Deity," and yet that there should be but one Supreme Deity, is a mystery which it is both impossible and unnecessary for us to understand, is not to be questioned. Is it not mysterious then that this mysterious doctrine is, or can be, by any believed! Yet Dr. Emmons tells us in the twentieth and several following pages of his sermon, that "the doctrine of the Trinity is one of the essential and most important articles of christianity"—that "a more plain, or a more important, or a more practical doctrine, cannot be found in the whole volume of inspiration!"—that "it cannot be denied, or explained away, without shaking the foundation of the gospel"—that if "there be any one doctrine of the gospel, which may be properly called *fundamental*, the doctrine of the Trinity may be properly called so, because the whole gospel is built upon it." And not only is this mysterious and unintelligible doctrine thus fundamental and all-important in the estimation of Dr. Emmons, but it "is a proper criterion, (p. 25, 26,) to determine this serious and interesting question," whether "professors of religion are real, or only nominal christians!" According to this criterion he evidently concludes that none are real christians, who do not "worship the only true God, existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost." As "Arians," therefore, "Socinians, Sabellians and Unitarians," do not thus worship the only true God; but worship him as *one* person—as a Being of *perfect unity*, they can be none other than *merely nominal christians!* How then can there be "any essential difference between their religious homage and the religious homage of Deists and Pagans!" Because they offer Supreme homage, to but *one Supreme God or person*, the Doctor by his uncommon sagacity, has discovered that their religious homage does not essentially differ from that of Pagans, who worship *Jupiter* and the *partner* of his throne! This sagacious divine, will not I presume, be envied for having discovered the *identity* of *Unitarianism* and *Polytheism*, however difficult or important the discovery!

The Doctor asks, "do any of them (Arians, &c.) approach the Father, through the Son, and by the Spirit?" Although I will

not peremptorily say that they do, thus approach the Father, in *sincerity and truth*, yet I do not hesitate to say, that *they all profess to do this;* But notwithstanding they professedly approach the Father, *through* the Son, and *by* the Spirit, yet Doctor Emmons seems unable to discover "the least trait of christianity in their religious worship!" Nor will his candor allow him to believe, that "such infidel and pagan services meet the divine approbation;" nor that they who thus worship God can be other than "*antitrinitarian* worshippers, and symbolizers with Pagans and Infidels."

From this review of Doctor Emmons' celebrated sermon on the Trinity, it appears that in order to avoid paganism and infidelity, and the dreadful consequences of "infidel and pagan services," we *must*, instead of "approaching the Father, *through* the Son, and *by* the Spirit," according to the *most plain and obvious meaning of the Apostle*, worship three distinct persons, perfectly equal in every divine perfection"—each "by nature God," and therefore each self-existent, and supreme! And this, sir, if I understand you, is a most important and fundamental article in *your* religious creed. And yet the author of this same sermon, explicitly avows it as his belief "that we ought to regard and acknowledge the FATHER as the *primary object* of religious homage," and that "Christians are required to address their prayers and praises to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the primary object of divine homage and adoration," (p. 23.) But is not this sentiment, perfectly accordant with the belief of "Arians, Socinians, and Unitarians?"—In page 24, the Doctor observes, "Though the Father is most generally to be distinctly and directly addressed; yet *sometimes* there may be a great propriety, in addressing the Son and Spirit according to their distinct ranks and offices"—But do either Arians, Socinians or Trinitarians, neglect to address the Son and Spirit according to their *ranks* and *offices?* Do not these same Deistical and Pagan worshippers, in common with Doctor Emmons, "perfectly agree in *the sole* object of their *supreme worship*," when, in imitation of the example, and in conformity to the direction of Christ they say, "Our *Father* which art in heaven," and when agreeably to Christ's instruction, they "ask the *Father* in *his name*, for every thing they want!" Do not these *antitrinitarian* worshippers agree in sentiment with the Doctor, that "no prayers or praises of ours can find acceptance with the Father unless they flow from the influence of the Spirit, and are offered in the name of his Son!" Do they not also symbolize with the Doctor, as well as with his "Pagans and Infidels," in the following sentiments?—"To obtain complete and satisfactory evidence, that there is but one living and true God, we must have resort to the Scriptures of truth, in which the divine unity is clearly and fully revealed."

—"The Son of God, by office, has acted, and still acts, in subordination to the Father, and that we are indebted to him, for his condescension and grace, in redeeming us to God by his blood."—"Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ;" "Christians may hold communion with the love of the Father in sending his Son; and with the love of the Son, in suffering on the cross;" yet "their communion with the Father, is not their communion with the Son, and their communion with the Son, is not their communion with the Father;" and their "access to God, is through Christ alone."

In all these things, Doctor Emmons' "Pagans and Infidels," profess to believe. They all "agree in the sole object of their supreme worship;" and yet they are to be "branded as *antichristian*! But does not the *Doctor believe all these things?* And yet *his religion* has no connection with *paganism*, although apparently forgetting his creed, and treating with seeming neglect, his *one* "*Supreme and primary object* of religious homage," he acknowledges two *other objects* as "by nature God." and "equal in every divine perfection" to be the objects of primary or supreme homage. and as entitled to "*distinct* and *equal adoration and praise!*" But is "there any essential difference between" this "religious homage, and the religious worship of Pagans," who worship a *plurality of Gods*, and some of them, at least a plurality of *equal Gods?* I am unwilling, however, to believe, nor do I believe, that Doctor Emmons. "in his religious devotions" has so far "symbolized with either Pagans, or Infidels," as to render it *impossible* for himself—or for others to "conceive how *he* is a real christian."—It is, however, much to be regretted that a man of his talents, modest deportment, amiable manners, and apparent piety;—a man whom I highly esteem and respect, and a man whose religious sentiments, generally, I consider as correct.—"It is much to be regretted," that this man should ever have made public, the sermon, which has now been reviewed.—It is still more to be regretted that by disseminating his sentiments, in the *manner* he has done, he has been greatly instrumental in creating and cherishing among many christians a bigotted, censorious and anathematory spirit, which is so uncongenial with the peaceable, gentle, candid, and benevolent spirit of the gospel. How strong, also, is the contrast between the spirit which Doctor Emmons possesses, and which he has so widely diffused in the christian public, and the spirit of the excellent and pious Doddridge and Watts! The former of these burning and shining lights was fully persuaded "that many things asserted on the one side and on the other, relating to the Trinity, are not fundamental in religion;" and that we ought to "be cautious, how we enter into *unscriptural niceties*, in expressing our own conceptions of this [illegible]"—His conduct corresponded with the liberality of

his mind, as he refused to subscribe "to articles of faith in words of human device, *as a test of orthodoxy*," nor would he consent to the exclusion of a profound Arian from the church of which he was the pastor.* Doctor Watts was, to say the least, equally tolerant and candid. But so narrow and contracted are the views of Doctor E. as not only to exclude Arians from the number, and peculiar privileges of Christians on earth, but from "the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven." Nor do I see, if his views are correct, but "the kingdom of heaven is" so "shut up," that neither "*they* that are entering," nor himself will "go in." It is however, as well my *belief*, as hope, that he has not the "keys of the kingdom of heaven, so intrusted to him," as that he shall effectually lock the gates of that kingdom either against *himself* or any of his *fellow christians*.

Dismissing Doctor Emmons and his view of the Trinity, I beg leave for a short time to introduce to your notice a few remarkable passages in a sermon, preached Jan. 10th, 1810, at the dedication of the church in Park Street, Boston, by

EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, D. D.

As you will not question, I presume, the orthodoxy of this gentleman, as a Trinitarian, I pray you to consider well his sentiments, concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. With Doctor Emmons, he believes in One God existing in three equal persons.

Speaking of Christ, he observes, p. 8. "In whom the human nature is raised to a *personal union* with the divine." "By this," in a note, "is meant, (1) that the union is so intimate, that, with the same lips, and in the same sentence, he can apply to both natures, the same *personal pronoun*."—What, sir, are we to understand by this observation? Is it not this—when Christ says "*I* am the *root* of David," he speaks as well of his *human nature*, as of his divine!—And when he says "*I* am the *offspring* of David," he speaks as well of his *divine*, as of his human nature, and represents himself as being both the *Creator* and the *creature* of the Creator! (2) "that the sufferings of the human nature are as meritorious as though they had been the sufferings of the divine."—If this be true, why I would ask, would not

* His biographer, Mr. Orton, observes,—"Once I remember some *narrow-minded* people of his congregation, gave him no small trouble on account of a Gentleman in communion with the church, who was a professed Arian; and who otherwise departed from the common standard of orthodoxy. This gentleman, they either wished to have excluded from the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, or to have his attendance on it prevented; but the Doctor declared that he would sacrifice his place, and even his life, rather than fix any such mark of discouragement upon one, who whatever his doctrinal sentiments were, appeared to be" (not a Pagan or an Infidel) but "a real Christian."

the sufferings of Paul, had he been without sin, have been as meritorious as the sufferings of Christ? Was not that apostle as truly united to the one God, as was the human nature of Christ! Was he not one with, or in, both Christ and the Father? was he not also "a partaker of the divine nature?" (3) "that same *person* that *suffered*, has the *reward* of governing the universe, and bringing his people to glory; all of which cannot be predicated of either nature exclusively."—But if all this cannot be predicated of either nature of Christ's person exclusively, yet a *part* of "all this" is predicable, it should seem of *each* nature. But is it indeed true, that each nature of Christ *partially* suffered, and was *partially* rewarded, by *partially* governing the universe! Is not this a just and fair representation of the Doctor's remark? Should you say, that he would complain of it as unjust, and unfair, I would then ask—whether "all which" he has said can "be predicated" of *both the natures as united* in the person of Christ? If so, then I see not but the *person* of Christ, consisting of Supreme Divinity and humanity, *suffered* and *died* upon the cross; and that this *same person* was *rewarded* with the government of the univsrse! But how, sir, could *Supreme Divinity* as united to humanity, either suffer or be rewarded? or how could the *humanity* of Christ, as united to divinity, have the government of the universe? These things are, in my view, as unintelligible as they seem unreasonable and preposterous.

Same page, the Doctor observes, "This person (Christ) is the *Word* by which God expresses the secrets of his mind, the organ by which he governs the universe, the channel through which all his communications to creatures are made, and the grand medium through which he is seen."—But if *God* does all these things *by* the *Word*, or Jesus Christ, as his *agent;* or as an *organ*, *channel*, *medium*, how is it possible that this same Word should, himself, "govern the universe," as *independent God!*

In p. 10, the following observations occur—"He (the Word) makes the bosom of his saints his *holy of holies*. This infinite favor comes to men through the intervention of the Son of God, the anuointed Mediator, the Christ; not the second person in the Trinity *as such*, and by no means the man of Nazareth *as such;* but an agent, who, appointed by the Father, and subject to his will, holds the middle place of Mediator between God and man, and unites both natures in this one office."—What construction, sir, is to be put on this very singular passage? If Christ *as the second person* of the Trinity does not make the bosom of his saints his holy of holies; and if the *man of Nazareth* does not do this, is it not difficult to conceive that the *person* of Christ, as God's agent, should confer upon them "this infinite favor?" But let it be admitted that this *is* possible; yet

is it not impossible to conceive that Christ, an *agent appointed* by the Father, and *subject* to his will, holding a *middle place* between God and man, and uniting both natures, divine and human in this one office—"Is it not impossible" to conceive that such a *subordinate person* is *equal* to the Father, whose *agent he is*, by whom *he was appointed*, and to whose will *he is subject!*

Same page, the Doctor observes, that this same agent, "the Christ," has with the Holy Spirit subject to his will, from the beginning, carried on all communications between God and men."—Here we find the person of Christ, *subject to the will of the Father*, having the *Holy Spirit subject to his will!* Must not Christ then be *inferior* to the Father, and the Holy Spirit *inferior* to Christ? And yet Christ and the Holy Spirit are, each equal to the Father in every divine perfection, and each the Supreme Deity! If, sir, my name must be cast out as evil —if I must be represented as a dangerous heretic, and as subverting the gospel, for not believing all this, most willingly do I submit to the *shame*, which I consider my *glory*.

Same page, the Doctor further observes—"The God of the Patriarchs, and of Israel, was no other than the mediatorial King, acting as the representative, and with the authority of the whole Godhead."—Here it is to be noted, that the God of the Patriarchs, and of Israel, is but one Lord or Being. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" But this *One God*, it seems, according to Doctor Griffin, is the mediator *between* the *Godhead*, or *himself*, and *men!* He is the *representative* of *himself*, and acts with the *authority*, which *he gave himself;* for "he never conducted," the Doctor tells us, the affairs of men as the second person in the Trinity. But he acted as the "God of Israel."

Of this same God of Israel, he observes, (p. 11,) "he lived, he toiled, he wept, with miserable men. When he had paid our ransom, *he ascended on high and received gifts for men, that the Lord God might dwell among them.*"—What a spectacle is here presented to our view! "The God of Israel"—the only Potentate—the self-existent, independent and unchangeable Jehovah, *toiling* and *weeping* with miserable men! And when this same God "had paid our ransom," by suffering and dying on the cross, "he received gifts for men" that he himself might dwell among them! Behold the *self-existent and independent God*—the "God of Israel," who is but *One God*, not only toiling and weeping among miserable men—but *suffering* and *dying*, and *rewarded* with gifts, that he might dwell among men! Who can contemplate this God of Doctor Griffin, without feeling emotions of pity both for himself and his admirers? And who can wonder that such a representation of the independent, the blessed and immutable God, should tend to promote the

cause of infidelity? Or who can wonder that the advocates for such a God, should possess and exercise that spirit of religious intolerance, which, were it in its power, would erect a *Vatican*, and establish a *holy Inquisition!*

Of the gifts which this same God received, the Doctor observes, same page, "the greatest was the Holy Spirit, whom as agent and representative, he sent forth to dwell more sensibly with his people."—Here, sir, you will please to observe, that the person who toiled, and wept, and suffered, and died, and received gifts, employed the "Holy Spirit, as *his agent and representative!*" and yet this same Holy Spirit is a self-existent, eternal, and independent person, possessed of "*every divine perfection!*" If these things are true, I must esteem them as very strange truths! If you, sir, either do or can believe them, the structure of your mind, must be very different from that of mine. If their apparent incongruities are reconcileable, I see not, I confess, how they can be reconciled.

In pages 24 and 25, speaking of the Fathers of New-England, the Doctor says, "I am ambitious to say, their views of evangelical truth are mine."—"They believed that the second person in the adorable Trinity, took upon himself, as Mediator, the seed of Abraham; and that this Mediator suffered death, &c. and (p. 23,) he observes, they believed that this same "Mediator received *power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many* as the Father *had given him.*"—That the Fathers of New-England believed, that the second person in the Trinity, was "equal in power and glory" to each of the other persons, or that he was the self-existent, and independent God, is to be admitted; but that they believed this same second person, or self-existent, and independent God, "suffered death," and "*received* power from the *Father*," seems incredible. If, however, they really did believe this, I should not be very "*ambitious* to say, their views" of this subject "are *mine.*" Nor do I see how Doctor Griffin could have consistently said this; for (p. 10.) he says that "infinite favor comes to man, through the intervention of "the anointed Mediator," and "*not* the *second person* in the Trinity *as such.*" If the Fathers of New-England believed that through the *second person* in the Trinity, *as Mediator*, "infinite favor comes to men;" and if Doctor Griffin does *not* believe that the Mediator is the second person in the Trinity, *nor* that infinite favor comes to men through the intervention of the second person in the Trinity, I should think there could be but little agreement in sentiment between him and the Fathers of New-England. Whether you, sir, will undertake to reconcile these seeming contradictions, I know not. But of this I am well assured, that the task would not be either easy or enviable.

Permit me now to turn your attention to "an invaluable lit-

tle tract" on the doctrine of the Trinity, written by Mr. T. A. and which seems to have had the unqualified approbation, and liberal patronage of "the most correct Theologians." On this little tract we will bestow but little and cautious attention, as its character for correctness, and conclusive reasoning, is established by a tribunal, from which it is hardly safe to appeal.

But after all, believing as I do, that no human theory is so fully correct and infallibly true, as to supersede the propriety of examining it, I will venture, however presumptuous it may be, to make a few enquiries and suggestions in relation to it.

In page 4 and 5, this writer, in a letter to a friend; speaking of Christ, admits that "in his highest nature he was begotten of the Father." And "why," he asks, might not God have a Son from eternity, whom he might be said to beget?" He adds, "permit me to say there never was a period when God had no Son, though he begat him."—Thus says Mr. T.A.—thus says Doctor Hopkins. But Doctor Emmons "feels constrained *to reject* the eternal generation of the Son; and Mr. Smith represents it as a doctrine which none can advocate, without the *daring impiety* of denying the truth of the declaration of God, by the mouth of the angel Gabriel.—On which side of the question, sir, does the truth lie? Although I shall not undertake to support either of the theories, yet I will take the liberty to ask, whether you do not find it very difficult to conceive of a *Son coeval with his Father*, or of an *eternal self-existent, and independent Son*, who was *begotten* by *his Father!*

Mr. T. A. does not admit of personal existence independent of attributes. Hence, (p. 6,) he asks, "What idea have you of personality distinct from essence or attributes?"—In relation to this subject, the gentleman, it is believed, is correct. To speak of a person possessing neither essence nor attributes, would be to speak of a mere *imaginary existence*, or *nothing*. As Jesus Christ then, the eternal Son of God is a person, he must possess attributes, and these attributes must have been coeval with his existence. But what are these attributes of the Son of God according to this writer's theory? They are none other than self-existence, independence and all possible perfections, both natural and moral. These constitute his personality, and *distinct* personality. But do they not also constitute him a *being*, an intelligent and *distinct being?* If not, nothing in the universe, it should seem, does or can constitute an intelligent being. And this Mr. T. A. admits, whatever he says to the contrary, notwithstanding. He observes, p. 10. "That Jesus Christ is spoken of as a being distinct from the Father, is one of the most evident truths on the face of the New-Testament. That he really is so, as to his mere human nature is granted by all parties. But that this language of the Scripture is intended to prove him to be a Being absolutely distinct

from God is not admitted." In p. 12, he observes, "Christ being spoken of as a distinct being or person from the Father, in regard to his highest nature, does not necessarily evince that he is so." To the truth and correctness of these questions, "the most correct Theologians" have given their assent.—Whether you, sir, are to be ranked with these same Theologists, I know not. But if this be the case, permit me to ask—since it "is one of the most evident truths on the face of the New-Testament" that "Jesus Christ is spoken of as a *distinct being* from the Father," is it not equally evident that he is a *distinct God* from the Father! Is it not equally evident also, that, if Jesus Christ is a being self-existent, independent and infinitely perfect, there are *two Gods* who are self-existent, independent, and infinitely perfect! And if the Holy Spirit is another *such being*, must there not be *three such Gods!* That there are indeed three self-existent, independent and infinite Gods, you will, I doubt not, deny. But so long as you admit the existence of three such "beings or persons," your denial will be very far from satisfactory to my mind; and that it should be more so to yours, is not a little surprising. If Christ is really and truly "a distinct being from the Father" and "in regard to his highest nature," to what purpose is it to say, that he may *not* be a being *absolutely* distinct from God," or that this "does not *necessarily* evince that he is so!" Does not this *salvo* evince a very great want of ingennousness, and a disposition to practice a species of Jesuitism, highly unbecoming a character in which there should be no guile? Besides, what are we to think of a man who does not scruple to say of a proposition, that it "is one of the *most evident truths on the face of the New-Testament;*" and yet does not scruple to *deny*, that the same proposition is either *absolutely* or *necessarily* true! To how little credence, according to Mr. A's theory, is New-Testament truth entitled, although "the most evident!" Alas! that human creeds and human authority should be held in so much *higher estimation*, than the creed, and the inspired writers of the New Testament Scriptures!

But notwithstanding Mr. T. A. seems unwilling to admit that Christ is absolutely and *necessarily* a distinct being from the Father, in regard to his highest nature, although the scripture speaks of him as such; yet, that he is a "being distinct from the Father, as to his mere human nature" is a truth which he says "is granted by all parties."—Whether all parties agree with Mr. A. on this subject, may very reasonably be questioned. I am willing, however, to admit that all *modern Trinitarians* do agree with him. But if he be thus *distinct* from the *Father*, must he not be as *really distinct* from the *Son*, or the second person in the Trinity; for the Son or the second person in the Trinity, according to the theory of this gentleman,

is not *really* or *necessarily* a distinct being from the Father, although he is represented as being so in scripture!—Here, sir, a very great and even insuperable difficulty is presented to my mind. If the humanity of Christ is a *being distinct* from his *divinity*, how can this same distinct being be *one person* forever with distinct divinity, or the second person in the Trinity? Can a *being* who is *distinctly a man*, and a *person* who is *distinctly God*, constitute *one person!* If they really do constitute one person, I would ask, whether the views, volitions and works of *the man*, are the views, volitions and works of *God!* and whether the views volitions and works of *God*, are the views, volitions and works of *the man!* If you should reject these suppositions as absurd, I would then ask, whether the views, volitions and works of *each* are so confounded or blended together, as to become common to the *one person*, compounded of divinity and humanity! This supposition, although it involves much confusion, seems the most rational. Yet on this supposition, I see not but the *humanity* of this complex person has claim to *divinity*, and that his *divinity* is to be estimated, at least in part, as *humanity!* These are but some of the difficulties in which this strange, and apparently preposterous theory seems to involve us. Is it not mysterious that reasonable beings should submit to, and glory in the thraldom of such mysteries as these!

In p. 13, the following paragraph occurs—"It is indeed true that Jesus Christ is represented in the bible, as receiving a commission from the Father, being sent of him, acting in subordination to his will and authority, and receiving inconceivable honor and reward for his obedience. If these things were spoken of him in regard to his human nature, no one would be disposed to question the argument hence deduced of his being a distinct agent, and inferior in nature to the Father. But we conclude, that they apply to him in regard to his most exalted nature."—Here, sir, you will please to observe; that according to the theory of Mr. A., Christ received a commission, a reward and honor from the Father, in regard to his most *exalted nature;* and that if it were *otherwise*, "none would be disposed to question *his inferiority* to the Father." Whether this gentleman is so ignorant of the Trinitarian theory in relation to this subject as not to know, that the most able and distinguished writers on the doctrine of the Trinity believe and advocate the *very reverse* of his statement, I know not; but this is really the case. Instead of representing Christ, as receiving a commission from, and being exalted by the Father in regard to *his most exalted nature*, Mr. Smith observes, p. 199. "*As the son of man*, Christ can have nothing but what is given him. Hence we read, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool!' 'Rule

thou in the midst of thine enemies!' I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession!' 'All power in heaven and on earth is *committed* unto me! Wherefore God hath highly *exalted* him and *given* him a name, that is above every name! And hath *made* him head over all things to the church, &c." Much we find in the sacred writings, of this tenor. This has induced some incautious readers to suppose, that the whole *person* of Christ is *derived* and *dependent!* But these, and all similar scriptures, relate *not* to the *divinity* of Christ's *person;* but to the mediatorial administration of Christ, in his glorified humanity. It is "*because he is the son of man.*"—Much more to this effect might be quoted from this writer. And much to the same effect might be quoted from other Trinitarian writers. But to multiply quotations would be needless. Enough has been quoted to convince you that if Mr. T. A. is correct in *his* view of Christ, the Christ of Mr. Smith, in "his *most exalted nature,*" is a "distinct agent, and *inferior in nature* to the Father." But if Mr. Smith's view of the subject is correct, then the Christ of Mr. T. A. "in regard to his *human nature,*" must be *divine*, even the *self-existent and independent God!* One of these gentlemen acknowledges and adores *that Christ*, or that nature *as divinity*, whom the other estimates and treats *as humanity.* Yet they *both advocate the same important, fundamental doctrine or truth!—they are both orthodox!—they will harmonize in sentiment, and can cordially give to each other the right hand of fellowship! They are both Trinitarians!* And what is equally strange, Mr. Smith's admirers, admire Mr. T. A. as having written "an invaluable little tract" in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, and Supreme Deity of Christ; and Mr. T. A.'s admirers, admire also Mr. Smith, as a "satisfactory" writer on the same subject! Whether *your* discernment, sir, has led you to discover the clashing and opposition of the sentiments of these writers, as above stated, I know not. If this has indeed been the case, permit me to ask, whether of the two theories, in your estimation, is the true one? If Mr. T. A.'s—then, so far as I can see, you acknowledge and worship as "the Supreme Deity," a "being," or nature, who was "*commissioned,*" and "*sent,*" of his Father; who "acted in *subordination* to the will and authority" of his Father, and who "*received* inconceivable honor and reward" from his Father, "*for his obedience!*" Will you acknowledge and worship such a *subordinate, dependent* and *inferior being* as this, as the *Supreme Deity!* If not, will you take Mr. Smith's ground by estimating and treating *that Christ* or nature, *as man* or human, who possesses *all power* in heaven and on earth, and a name that is above *every name!* But perhaps you will take the ground of neither of these gentlemen; but that of Dr. Griffin, which is "that the

same *person* that *suffered*, has the *reward* of governing the universe; all of which cannot be predicated of either nature exclusively." If you take this ground, you involve the subject, perhaps, in more mystery and darkness, by which you may keep it, and yourself a little more *out of sight*. But the subject would, I conceive, be relieved of no difficulty.

I have now, sir, reviewed the sentiments of several of the most celebrated modern writers, in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity, and particularly in relation to the character of Jesus Christ. In doing this I am sensible that I have not minutely examined all their views, and in all their bearings. Nor was this my design: but to expose the clashings of their several theories; the very great difficulties which attend each, and to shew that neither of them is satifactorily defensible, either by reason or scripture. My neglect more fully to examine their sentiments, and the arguments which they employed in defending them, is not to be attributed to an apprehension that they are unanswerable. In this light I do not view them, or *any* of them. Nor ought it, I would hope, to be attributed to vanity or presumption, were I to say, that the efforts of my well-meaning pen have made that disclosure of their theories, which furnishes convincing evidence, that they cannot *all* be true, and that *neither* of them is entitled to that *infallibility* which has a claim to *implicit belief*.

Should you charge me with treating the sentiments of either of these writers unfairly, I know not but the charge will be well founded; as in examining them, I could not always be certain that I fully understood their meaning, and as this examination, was sometimes accompanied with a more "delightful task;" *that* of instructing my children. It is my hope, however, that I have made no important misrepresentation of the sentiments of either of the gentlemen. If I have done it, I can truly say, it was not with design.

I would further observe, that as this letter has been protracted much beyond my original plan, and assumed a form, which I had not contemplated, it is, I am persuaded, justly chargeable with repetitions, and the want of that arrangement of its several parts, which is necessary to exhibit its contents in the most advantageous point of view. These untoward circumstances I would gladly remedy, could I do it consistently with my other duties and engagements.--But if I have written intelligibly, and communicated truth, which I have endeavored to do, my principal object has been effected.

If I have not treated the authors, whom I have reviewed, with suitable marks of respect, it has been undesigned, and you will have the goodness to impute it not to want of respect to their *characters*, and religious opinions in *general*, but to a full conviction, that their opinions respecting the doctrine of the

Trinity, ought not to be held in that high reverence, as unquestionable, and most important truths, in which many seem to hold them, and apparently without discovering, that if some of them are *correct*, the others must be *erroneous*.

You must perceive, sir, that an important object of this communication, has been to convince you, that your view of the doctrine of the Trinity is indefensible, and that the ground which I have taken respecting the subject, is far from affording you and others, a justifiable pretext for rejecting me as an heretick.

You will bear it in mind, that "it is *solely* on account of the ground I have taken with relation to Christ and the Holy Spirit, that you have been constrained to suspend exchanges with me."—Is it not then a conceded point, that we unite in the belief that God is *One*, and that he is the only being in the universe, who is self-existent and possessed of all possible, and infinite perfections; and that, as such, he is entitled to supreme love, adoration and obedience? But what is the heresy of which I am guilty, with respect to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, to justify your rejection of me as a christian brother! The record which *God* has given of his Son, I profess to believe. I acknowledge it all, as worthy of the most ready and joyful acceptation; and I humbly hope with sincerity and grateful emotions of heart. I believe him to be the Son of God—his own Son—his only begotten Son—the first born of every creature—the image of the invisible God, and the brightness of the Father's glory. I believe that the One God stipulated with him the great and glorious work of man's redemption before the birth of time—that he has, as an all-sufficient Saviour, accomplished that work according to the will of his Father; and that it is in virtue of what he has done and suffered in our behalf, that pardon and eternal life, are obtainable blessings; and that there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. I believe also that this unspeakably great, and glorious, and excellent being, or person, who existed in the beginning with God, and who is called God, is, in the most intimate manner, united with the one Supreme God, even his God and Father, insomuch that they are one, so far as this union constitute a oneness, between two distinct persons or intelligent agents.

Viewing the subject in this light, I find a Mediator—a suitable Mediator to undertake and to carry on a treaty of peace between the One infinitely Holy God, and sinful men—a Mediator who is neither this One God, nor a man, but a real and proper person or being, who holds a middle place between both.

How far your sentiments differ from mine respecting this august and illustrious personage, I am not prepared positively to say, as you have refused to state them to me when requested to

do it. But that your sentiments really differ from mine is highly probable. And the difference, I strongly apprehend, is as great as that which exists between the character of Christ, as above represented, and the character of a proper man who began to exist with the christian era. You do not, I would presume, believe that the one God, "the Supreme Deity," is the Mediator between the Supreme Deity, or between himself and men! Nor can I easily conceive that you seriously believe that this same Supreme Deity, as united to a proper man, mediates between his own complex being or person and men. But if you really do believe this, you believe a doctrine, which, I cannot but think, involves the most palpable inconsistencies. Is it possible, that one and the same being, however complex we may suppose his character, should act the part of a Mediator between himself and others? Must not the conclusion, then, be unavoidable that, according to your theory, the Mediator between God and men, is a *proper man*, a *mere creature*, and of *moderate antiquity*. Such, sir, so far as I have been able to ascertain your sentiments, appears to me the character of your Mediator and Saviour!

With respect to the Holy Spirit, we probably harmonize in sentiment. Do you not, with me, believe that the Spirit of God is not a distinct being from God himself? What then can be the difference between us, in relation to this subject, but that which is *merely verbal, or circumstantial?* And yet you are "persuaded that I have embraced the most dangerous and destructive errors, with relation to Christ and the Holy Spirit!" And the "scheme" which I have embraced you, "verily believe is subversive of the gospel, and tends to drown men in destruction and perdition!" Alas, my brother! that you should lay so much stress on the tythe of mint, of annis and cummin, and seemingly pass over, as of little or no importance, the weightier matters!

"You would rejoice this day in giving me an invitation to preach to your people, were it not for the ground I have taken in relation to Christ and the Holy Spirit." It is with the deepest regret, sir, that I learn the effect of that orthodoxy, which stands in human creeds and human device! With respect to such orthodoxy, I have only to say, O, my soul! come not thou into its secrets—unto its honors, be not thou united.

Under its influence, you have manifested a spirit not so fully allied, as I could wish, to that "charity which suffereth long and is kind." Of this however I make no serious account. I wish I could say the same of other exceptionable parts of your conduct. But these, sir, are of too serious a nature to be viewed with indifference, and to be passed without reprehension.—You have rejected me as a christian minister in refusing to exchange with me. This you have *unkindly* done with-

out assigning to me (whatever you may have done to others) any *distinct* or *definite reasons* for it, notwithstanding I have requested and urged you to do it. You have *perseveringly declined* to treat with me as an offending brother, according to the laws of Christ's kingdom. You have been instrumental with others, of raising a high, and strong, and hitherto insurmountable barrier to my communion with, and preaching to a considerable number who formerly attended on my ministry; for whom I have ever cherished the most sincere affection; whom I have ever treated with kindness;—whose best interest I have ever sought, and for whose everlasting salvation, I am now ready to spend and be spent, so far as may be consistent with my other duties. Nor had your influence been equal to your wishes, should I now have the honor and high satisfaction, of preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified to a respectable, an affectionate and beloved christian society. This, I presume, you will not deny, unless you will admit that it is your wish my people should hear and embrace doctrines, which in your estimation are "subversive of the Gospel." and which you say "tend to drown men in destruction and perdition." All this you have done and been, while I have kept silence. But to what, sir, is all this to be traced, but to my belief and acknowledgment of the Holy Spirit, as essentially the same as the one Supreme God, and to my belief and acknowledgment of Jesus Christ, as a person or being greatly superior to your view and conception of him! This is the light in which I view the subject. Nor do I think it in your power to place it in a *true*, and yet a *different point* of light. You will not, therefore, think it strange, should I esteem your conduct as blameable. I really do consider it so, and in no small degree. I consider you as having violated that religious and solemn obligation, which was created between us when I presented, and you received from me, at your ordination, the hand of christian fellowship. Nor can I easily conceive of any expedient to which you can resort to justify your conduct But if your conduct is indefensible, it must *in a high degree be criminal.* I pray you, therefore, very seriously to review it. And that the result may be such as it ought to be, is my hearts desire and prayer to God.

In this connection I beg leave to suggest, that your representation of the Trinity by *unscriptural* words and phrases *may be* attended with no little *danger*, as well as mystery; and that it *may be* followed with very *unhappy and lamentable consequences.* Indeed, is not all this *really true?* it is not to be questioned that this representation of *human device* has been, and now is the occasion of many christians viewing their fellow-christians, who speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the *pure, correct,* and *intelligible* words of Scripture, as heretics, as "symbolizing with Pagans and Infidels," and as

"having no good ground to hope that they are not real christians!" Because these same *pagan, and infidel christians* think it right in the sight of God to hearken to the *words which he has dictated* in relation to himself, his Spirit and his Son, more than unto the *words of human invention*, can you discover nothing dangerous, in receiving and treating these christians as subverters of the Gospel, and as doctrines which tend to drown them in perdition? If there is no danger in this, what danger can there be in the sin of judging and setting at nought a brother, or of estimating the words of *ignorant men, more higly than the words of the living God!* it is very possible that in this there is much more sin and danger than you suspect. Should it, as I strongly apprehend, really be the case, the sin and danger in which you are involved, must be *peculiarly great*. It is my hope that you will, with much seriousness and care, review this subject, that you may (if you now do not) see it in a clear and just light.

In this connection you will permit me to ask, whether it is with the *entire* approbation of your understanding and conscience, that you require of your serious people their assent to words and phrases of human device, as a *condition* of their admittance to your christian fellowship? How you can justify this your conduct to your own mind, I know not. You require of your fellow christians, if I mistake not, as a test of orthodoxy and a term of communion, that, among other things, they profess to believe in the existence of three persons in the Godhead, equal in power and glory! But do any members of your church or congregation, understand the import of this proposition? *Do you understand it yourself?* This, I think, you will not pretend. Ask the membersof your church separately, how they understand it—ask the applicants for admission to communion, what they understand by it, and they will not fail to convince you, I am persuaded, that their views of it are extremely indistinct, confused and unsatisfactory. Must not your conduct then in requiring their assent to this unintelligible proposition be *exceedingly unreasonable?* Is it not *highly criminal?* By what authority do you require them to believe the supposed truth of a proposition, expressed in words which man's wisdom inventeth, when the terms of that proposition are not understood, and of course their import, if they have any, *not believed!* Can you seriously reflect on this subject, and feel no reproof of conscience? Or can your serious people reflect on what they have done, and continue to do, in relation to this subject, without self-reproach? I see not, I confess, how this can possibly be the case consistently with that respect and reverence, which are justly due to the inspired scriptures, as the only rule of christian faith, or consistently with the approbation of reason and conscience.

This departure from the simplicity of the gospel, and primitive practice in the christian church, is unjustifiably the occasion, I am persuaded, of many, and great, and lamentable evils.

The liberal and beneficent spirit of the gospel, enlightens and expands the mind—it thinketh no evil—behaveth not itself unseemly; it is impartial and ingenuous; seeketh not its own; is not puffed up; vaunteth not itself. It actuates the heart with all the benign and tender charities. It breathes diffusive good will and universal benevolence. It delights to do good and communicate—to render good for evil, and blessing for cursing. It calls no man master but Christ, and acknowledges no other rule of faith and practise, than that which is penned under the guidance of inspiration It unites in one the children of God, however widely, as to place, they may be scattered abroad. It studies and pursues the things which make for peace, and tends to improvement in the things which are "more excellent." But how little, in comparison with what might be expected, does this spirit appear among us and around us, in its amiable, and lovely, and blessed fruits? That this is *wholly* owing to an undue and unjustifiable estimation of unscriptural words and phrases, and of human creeds and formularies as tests of orthodoxy, and communion, I would by no means assert. But that the evils under consideration are, in no small degree, to be traced up to this lamentable source, admits not of reasonable doubt. But for these devices of human wisdom the christian church would not, as it now is, be shivered into angry factions; a spirit of proselytism would not, as it now does, operate with misguided and unhallowed zeal; bigotry and censoriousness would relax their rigid features and smooth their wrinkled and repulsive visage; warm debates and rancorous controversy about "doctrines, the commandments of men," and unintelligible mysteries of human origin, would subside, and give place to debates and controversies of far different spirit and character, and worthy both of christians and the noble cause of christianity. The *school of the prophets* would be erected on a basis worthy of its liberal patronage. The bond of general associations, instead of "scorched thread," would consist of that three-fold cord, faith, hope and charity, which can never be broken. From such associations we might expect no decree that baptisms are invalid merely because they were administered by men, who, after diligently examining the holy scriptures, were constrained to believe, that they do not contain the doctrine of One God existing in three equal persons! Nor might we expect that any religious combinations would expel from their affectionate people, or attempt to expel, amicable, exemplary and diligent pastors, because they cannot believe a mysterious and unintelligible doctrine—a doctrine which holds a very *conspicuous place* in the *catholic creed* of the *Roman*

catholic church! We might expect that christian churches would not exclude from their communion worthy, intelligent and pious members, and *without a single admonition*, because they do not understand, and therefore cannot believe this mysterious doctrine. We might expect not to hear human authorities quoted as scripture texts; especially as paramount to the authority of such texts.

To a departure from gospel simplicity and from apostolic and primitive practice, by setting up words, and phrases, and compositions of human device, as tests of orthodoxy and communion, these evils are in a great measure to be traced, as the occasional cause. And were I to add, that to this same source were in no small degree to be traced the existence of the shocking features of the church of Rome—the enormous power, the overgrown wealth, the profound ignorance of the clergy; the gross superstitions, and rancorous, and sanguinary persecutions, which existed in, and miserably managed the christian church through many successive centuries—" Were I to make this addition," I should but speak the words of truth and soberness.

I pray you, sir. very seriously to reflect on these things; and then say, whether necessity be not laid upon us to abandon a system, whose foundation and superstructure but too much resembles the memorable *catholic edifice*, from which so many anathematory thunders have issued; and cling to the inspired scriptures as worthy of all acceptation, and as *every way* the rule of our faith and practice. Let these be our *sole counsellors* in all matters of religion. and they will not fail to guide us in the path of peace and safety.

That we shall all, ere long, adopt and pursue this wise, pacific and christian policy; and that this will be the happy case with the whole Israel of God, I most devoutly hope and firmly believe. Whether we shall either of us live to see the accomplishment of this happy event, I presume not to say. But whenever the event shall happen, the christians of that happy day will, I doubt not, view many of the religious systems and practices of our times with the same eyes and emotions with which we do those of the *holy catholic church.*

But however dark and furious, and conflicting the clouds, which overspread our religious hemisphere, yet, for consolation and encouragement, the fair and cheering face of heaven is beginning to disclose itself in the horizon. Joyful omen of a serene and cloudless sky! The holy scriptures are now, *without comment, supplement* or *appendage* visiting, with their mild, unobstructed and healing beams every habitable portion of our dark and guilty world. The peaceful olive is planted or seems to be planting in almost every clime, and promises a luxuriant growth; and to afford, " from storms a shelter, and

from heat a shade." Visionary schemes and cob-web experiments in politics and religion begin, by many, to be held in just contempt; and things which are far better, to be duly appreciated. The stern and awful features of *adulterated orthodoxy* begin to relax and soften into smiles, and the wan and lifeless countenance of *pseudo*-catholicism begins to assume more animating, and well-proportioned, and interesting features. Not a few begin more clearly to discover the difference between religious usurpation and intoleranee, and christian liberty and rights; between dogmatism and anathemas, and luminous reasoning and gospel philanthropy; between the turbid swelling waters which burst from a human fountain, and the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal issuing from the throne of God and the Lamb. Nor do they less distinguish the difference between the pleasant fruits which are abundantly produced by the immortal tree which grows on the bank of this beautiful river, and the fruit

> "Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> "Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

Nor does this discrimination fail, at least in some measure, to produce the effects which might be reasonably hoped and expected.

These things are a happy presage of a not far distant arrival of that auspicious day, when "the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; when Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim;" when "the watchmen shall see eye to eye;" when every wall of partition between the different tribes and denominations of men shall be broken down; when none other than the gospel standard shall be erected, to which all nations shall flow, when the whole human family shall "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" when "every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

In the pleasing anticipation of that blessed day, and in the devout hope that its mild and cheering dawn will soon be seen and happily realized in this dark and chilling region, is the heart's desire and prayer to God of your friendly although rejected brother. JACOB NORTON.

APPENDIX

TO

TRINITARIAN PROFESSORS OF RELIGION.

Fellow Christians, and Beloved in the Lord,

PERMIT me to address you, in the view of the preceding letter, as well with a spirit of ingenuous concern and fidelity, as of meekness and love.

My object is to solicit your serious and impartial attention, briefly, to several subjects, which you must esteem as highly interesting and important, and as having a strong claim to the dispassionate and unbiassed exercise of your understandings, and to your practical regard.

You profess to be the disciples and friends of Jesus Christ, the benevolent founder of our holy religion, whose spirit is tolerant, fostering, mild, conciliatory, pacific and beneficent.

To possess, and to be guided by this spirit, is the ornament and the glory of the christian character. And to encourage and promote its exercise, to the utmost of our power, is as well a precious privilege, as an important and indispensable duty. But is this privilege duly estimated? Is this duty suitably discharged? If weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, must you not find yourselves, in relation to this subject, censurably wanting? Is it not a subject for deep regret, that ceremonials in religion, unscriptural words, and phrases, and formularies, and difference in opinion with respect to religious subjects, which are either of minor importance, or too abstruse to be easily and clearly understood, should set at variance, and too often at irreconcileable variance, those, who sincerely love our Lord Jesus Christ, and whose hearts are attached to that religion which he taught and inculcated? That this should be the case, is deeply to be deplored; and that the evil might be removed, is devoutly to be wished. But is this evil of such a nature as not to admit of removal? It is hoped, it is indeed presumed that it is not. Let the attempt be suitably made to renounce it, and desirable success, it is confidently believed, will be the result.

What then is to be done? What have *you* to do, my christian brethren, in this interesting and important business? You will not plead, I would presume, that you have no concern in it. You are to "arise, for this matter belongeth unto you. Be of good courage, and do it." And as you would accomplish it in

the best manner, and to the best effect, you will not neglect to imbibe, more copiously, the spirit of the gospel. This spirit "suffereth long, and is kind. It envieth not: vaunteth not itself: is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked: thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things." Let this spirit have that governing influence over your minds, and hearts, and conduct, which it ought to have, and a dividing spirit, a spirit of angry and unhallowed contention, a spirit of bigotry, censoriousness and denunciation, will happily subside or disappear. But how, my brethren, is the charitable and divine spirit of the gospel, in the most successful manner, to be cherished and promoted; and the opposite spirit to be discountenanced and suppressed? Is it not by holding the gospel in that high and unrivalled estimation, which will effectually influence your minds and your hearts to embrace it, as the exclusive rule of your faith and practice? A departure from this rule, by the establishment of human creeds and formularies, as tests of orthodoxy and terms of christian fellowship, has, in a great measure, been the occasion of obscuring the mild and cheering light of the gospel, of covering the christian world with darkness, of dividing christians into angry, and contentious, and bitter factions: of substituting many gross and senseless superstitions, and the most idle and ridiculous rites and ceremonies, in the room of the plain doctrines and significant and simple rites and ceremonies, taught and inculcated in the gospel. It has, in a word, been instrumental, and in various ways, of great and incalculable evil to the cause and interest of pure and undefiled christianity. But are christians in general, are *you*, my brethren, chargeable with no departure from the safe and infallible standard of the gospel, as the rule of faith and practice? Happy were it for yourselves, and for our common christianity, were you chargeable with no such departure.

I am not unaware, that you *profess* to receive the inspired scriptures as the *only rule* of your faith and practice. But while in *words* you make this profession, yet do you not in *deeds* seem to deny it? Do not many of you *practically* say, that these scriptures are not a competent criterion, or test, by which to judge, what are the necessary qualifications for admission to the special ordinances of Christ's visible kingdom! If this is not the language of your conduct, most devoutly do I wish to be convinced of it. But so long as you countenance and insist upon an assent to articles of faith of human device, as an *indispensable requisite* for the admission of your fellow christians to your fellowship and communion, must it not be admitted, that you treat the divine scriptures as an *incompetent* test of chris-

tian orthodoxy, and of the christian character? And does not your conduct seem strongly indicative of that want of confidence in respect and reverence for these scriptures, to which they have a most just and solemn claim?

If these scriptures are, indeed, in your estimation, a sufficient, a full, and a clear rule of faith and practice, why will you substitute and tenaciously cling to another, drawn up and methodized in words of man's invention? Why will you refuse, and persist in refusing to admit to your christian communion, those who profess their faith in the holy scriptures, as containing all, and their only articles of religious faith, and who visibly maintain the christian character? Why will not those scriptures enable you to judge as correctly of their hearts and lives, as any human creed, or supplement, or appendage to the inspired volume? I would rather ask, do not those scriptures furnish you with a *better*, and a *much better rule*, for thus judging, than any such creed, supplement, or appendage? Why, then, do you wish for—why insist upon any other rule than that which the inspired scriptures furnish? Is there nothing in this, which appears to you incongruous, unjustifiable, and censurable?

On what principle, let me ask, is this policy of human origin and patronage, defensible? Would you not view it as most unreasonable, imposing and tyrranous, were you required to give your assent to the religious dogmas of the church of Rome, or of any other corrupt and erroneous church, in order to your enjoying the privilege of a seat at the Lord's table? And in case your consciences were to constrain you to withhold your assent, your names were to be cast out as evil, and you were to be viewed and treated as "symbolizers with Infidels and Pagans," would you not think yourselves greatly injured, and the pure religion of the gospel as highly disrespected and abused? Why then will you require your fellow christians to assent to a creed of human fabrication, as a term of their admission to your fellowship, and in case they withhold assent, treat them in the manner as above stated? You are to bear in mind, that human creeds, of *every description*, are founded on the *same general principles*, and supported by the *same general arguments*. You cannot, therefore, plead for the creed of your own forming, without virtually pleading the cause of every other creed of human form, however erroneous and absurd.

Although it is not my design to enter into a discussion of articles of faith of human device, or to decide with respect to their general correctness or incorrectness, yet I beg leave to solicit your serious and solemn attention to a particular article, to which you profess to give your assent, and to which you require the assent of others, as a term of christian communion. The article to which I refer, is that which relates to the doctrine of the Trinity, and which asserts that there are three per-

sons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these three are equal in every divine perfection. Do you, christian brethren, assent to this article with your *understanding?* Have you any distinct ideas of its *imports?* If not, how can you satisfy your consciences in *professing* to assent to it? Can it be justifiable in the sight of God, or in the view of any unprejudiced and reflecting mind, to profess to believe, and in the most solemn manner, in the truth of a proposition, the *terms* of which are *unintelligible?* Is not such a profession, to say the least, an act of trifling with our holy religion, and even its divine author? But are not religious transactions, of all others, the most solemn and sacred? Can they be trifled with, without incurring guilt? Can they be acceptable to God, or profitable to man, if they have not the *sanction and suffrage of the understanding?* Can you reflect on this subject, and feel no remonstrance of conscience against assenting to the article under consideration, and requiring assent to it from others, as a test of their religious character, and as their passage to your christian charity? Do you pretend to understand the import of this mysterious, and, as Dr. Watts expresses it, *strange* doctrine? Do you understand by it, that the Son and Spirit of God, are distinct intelligent persons, beings, or agents, and equal to God the Father in every divine perfection? If you understand the article in this sense, and believe it to be true, do you not, in assenting to it, profess to believe in *three self-existent, independent, and infinitely perfect Gods or Deities?* But if by this article you understand any thing *essentially different* from this, do you not perceive, that the Son and Spirit must be, in your estimation, *essentially different in character or perfections from the Father?* Whether, then, you assent to this doctrine or article, as implying, either that the Son and Holy Spirit of God are distinct intelligent persons, beings, or agents, and equal to God the Father; or, as implying something essentially different, must not your profession involve you in the absurd and shocking doctrine of *tritheism*, or in the doctrine of the *inequality* of the *Son* and *Spirit* with the Father? But is it not true, that you assent to this mysterious article in *neither* of these senses, nor in *any distinct and intelligible sense whatever?* Pardon me the wrong, my brethren, if I misrepresent you. But while I believe that I do not, I can contemplate your conduct in relation to this subject, with none other, than with feelings of deep regret and concern. And this regret and concern are not a little increased, when I farther contemplate the lamentable effects which this doctrine produces on your minds and conduct, in regard to those, who, in speaking of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, use the pure and intelligible words of scripture. Do you not view and treat them, as espousing a most dangerous and alarming error? as unworthy of your christian

fellowship, and as unworthy of the christian name? To what source is this your view, and this your treatment of them, to be traced, but your strange attachment to words and phrases of *human invention*, which are neither explained nor understood, in relation to this "strange" doctrine? Do not your dissenting and rejected brethren profess to believe every thing which the *Scripture says* concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Do they not express, what they believe respecting them, in scriptural, and therefore, intelligible language? Do they not hold in *equally high estimation*, as yourselves, the *Holy Spirit* of God? And do they not hold in *much higher estimation* than you do, the *Son* of God? Of the truth of this, I am fully persuaded; nor can I but believe, that the same persuasion would be yours, were you, without prepossession or bias, to attend to the statement which they make of their sentiments, and the arguments which they urge in support of them. Impressed with this belief, I cannot but consider your view and treatment of your dissenting brethren, as highly injurious with respect to *them*, as operating to the discredit of the system of *orthodoxy* in general, and as hurtful and dangerous in regard to *yourselves*. Are you not sensible, that the expressions which you use in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity are, generally, *unscriptural*, and, as many of your christian brethren believe, *anti*-scriptural? But are you under no apprehension, in doing this, that you *add* to the words of *divine prophecy!* Besides, does not the use of such expressions tend very greatly to obscure the light of divine truth, to perplex the serious and enquiring mind, to produce and perpetuate unprofitable, intemperate, unchristian and schismatic disputes; to weaken and destroy christian charity and affection, and to create and cherish a spirit of suspicion, of jealousy, of bitterness, and of vain and wretched jangling among brethren, who might otherwise dwell together in unity.

Permit me, christian brethren, earnestly to entreat, to urge you very seriously and prayerfully to examine, to re-examine, and solemnly to reflect on these things, that you may satisfactorily ascertain whether you are not "utterly in a fault" with respect to them. If this really be the case, (and I am strongly apprehensive that it, indeed, is) there is no time to be lost in correcting your errors, in retracing your steps, and in turning them into the "old paths, the good way," the way of divine revelation.

Is it not the part of wisdom and duty to abandon words, and phrases, and inventions of human device, as religious tests and standards by which to try either your own hearts, or the hearts of others? Such tests and standards are, at best, but fallible

and very uncertain. Nor indeed is it in our power, by any rule whatever, whether human or divine, to determine with certainty, whose heart is right in the view of God. The best and the only rule which we have of judging on this subject, is the fruits which a man produces in his life and conversation. If these are good, we have the best evidence we can have that his heart is good also. This is the only rule which the great Founder of our mild and holy religion has furnished, by which to regulate our charity and practice towards others. Why, then, shall we not embrace, and strictly adhere to this rule of Christ as our *sole directory?* This rule, as the guide of our charity and conduct towards others, is in the *highest degree* good, and wise, and excellent, and safe. Why, then, would you wish to substitute one in its room, which, on mature reflection, I would fain believe, you must be convinced is far from being either so good or so safe? The rule of Christ needs no substitute. *It requires no amendment.* Can any substitution or amendment then be made to it, with other than *rash* and *irreverent hands?*

Dear brethren, I beseech you diligently to ponder these things in your hearts. Seriously enquire whether you have not inconsiderately, unreasonably, and even criminally departed from the simplicity of the faith and spirit of the gospel, in relation to the things which have now passed in your review? Should you be convinced that this is indeed the case, may it not be hoped, and confidently expected, that, under the influence of that religion and policy which stand not in the wisdom of men, but which is without partiality and without hypocrisy, you will explicitly and practically acknowledge your error? Will you, not only with a spirit of meekness and charity, but with a noble independence and magnanimity of mind, dare to acknowledge and avouch the inspired scriptures as the sole rule of your faith and practice? To patronize that religion which consists, *not* in unintelligible mysteries and speculative opinions; or which is entangled with the strife of words which man's wisdom inventeth; *but* which consists in poorness of spirit; in mourning under a sense of sin; in meekness; in hungering and thirsting after righteousness: in a merciful disposition and conduct; in purity of heart and life; in studying the things which make for peace, and in the practice of whatsoever things are true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report? Will you not place more confidence in, and more highly estimate a religion of this character, than in that, which consists in words, in professions, in supposed or real orthodox opinions, in high and irregular excitement of the passions, in tumultuary emotions of mind, or in any articles which compose a human creed?

Will you not give countenance and encouragement, in every suitable way, to your public teachers, to each other, and to all within the sphere of your influence, to a free and diligent study of the holy scriptures, and to an open and unreserved communication of the result of their studies and researches? Will you not do every thing in your power to promote scriptural knowledge, and to make the study of the scriptures appear, as it really is, of all other studies, the most safe, useful, and important? And will you not indignantly frown upon any measures which are, or may be adopted and pursued, to attach more weight and importance to the words, and phrases, and theories of fallible and erring man, than to those scriptures which are worthy of all acceptation?

Will you not summon to your aid that christian fortitude which will allow you to call no man master but Christ, and to subscribe to no creed which has not the sanction of his authority?

"I beseech you, brethren, by the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the truth which he hath sealed with his own blood, very seriously and prayerfully to attend to, and reflect on these things. Beware of an uncharitable and dividing spirit. Lay aside all party and invidious names of distinction. Abandon every narrow, unsocial, and party scheme and pursuit. Where there is difference in sentiment between yourselves and others, which, on neither side, is inconsistent with the spirit of christianity, forbear one another in love. Let it be your steady object to keep, not *unity of sounds* in the *bond of ignorance;* nor *unity of practice* in the *bond of hypocrisy;* but "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Be not too confident in the correctness of your own opinions, nor too uncharitable in your censures. Enlist yourselves, as christians, under no other head but Christ, and insist on no other term of christian communion, than that which is plainly stated in the gospel. Strenuously, but with the meekness of wisdom, assert the liberty of judging for yourselves, and that liberty in general, by which Christ hath made you free. But forget not to allow others the same privilege with safety to their reputation. Let the Bible be your sole guide in all matters of faith and practice; not merely in *pretence*, but in *deed* and in *truth*." *If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them.*